

REGIONAL COLLABORATING CENTRES

OVERSIGHT, CORE FUNCTIONS, AND PRIORITIES

1. BACKGROUND

Considering the health challenges on the African continent and the need for an accountable Health Security Framework, the African Union Heads of State and Government (AU HoSG) approved the establishment of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and its Regional Collaborating Centres (RCCs) through **Assembly Decision /AU/Dec.554 (XXIV)**, during the AU Summit held in January 2015 at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Africa CDC is designed to work through a network of its RCCs. The RCCs aim to bring into reality an “Africa CDC without walls” that supports African Union Member States at the point of need.

2. RCC OVERSIGHT AND COLLABORATION MECHANISM

Collaborative and oversight structures are in place to ensure RCCs attain a seamless interface with the Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Health Organizations, and other relevant stakeholders within the region in attaining the regional public targets. Such regional mechanisms include:

- I. The Regional Consultative Committee led by the Ministers responsible for health which serves as an oversight and strategic advisory group for the RCCs;
- II. The Regional Technical Advisory Committee with technical experts from Member States, RECs, and other relevant health stakeholders which plays an advisory role to the RCCs;
- III. Technical working groups (TWG) and community of practices who serve as tactical teams to drive specific regional public health priority agendas and are formed based on specific needs and areas of work;
- IV. Ad hoc technical forums such as scientific conferences or regional meetings that connect and bring together experts from the same area of work to exchange knowledge, share lessons learned and experience, and network for the common good and health security of the region.

3. RCC CORE FUNCTIONS

As a specialized technical institution of the African Union, and as stated in Article 24 (1) of the Africa CDC Statute, Africa CDC aims to ensure collaboration for effective execution of its strategic plan through the RCCs which link it to the Public Health Institutions and stakeholders within the African Union Member States. In achieving this, the RCCs are in charge of the following core functions:

- I. Fostering coordination, collaboration, and integration among African Union Member States, RECs, and other public health stakeholders operating within the region.
- II. Mapping, strengthening, and networking of public health assets to harness existing capacities and capabilities for advancing public health impact in the regions.
- III. Facilitating knowledge exchange and sharing of health information on time.
- IV. Implementation of the Africa CDC strategic plan within the regions.

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4. SHORT AND MEDIUM-TERM PRIORITIES

The Africa CDC RCCs short and medium-term priorities are aligned with the RCC core functions and cover four main areas of work:

- I. **Regional Economic Communities and other Health partner's engagement** – The RECS have identified and set key priorities for health within each Region and they serve as part and parcel of the AU operating structure. Africa CDC RCCs will work with the RECS while engaging relevant partners/stakeholders present within each region with their existing technical and resource capacity to support the regional priorities. Engagement of all existing stakeholders will ensure alignment, standardization, and harmonization of approaches to harness the different public health efforts and capacities within each region.
- II. **Regional knowledge management** – There is a substantial existence of health and non-health data relevant to disease control and prevention within each region and within individual countries. Africa CDC RCCs will work with the Member States and stakeholders within each region to ensure collaborative investment in collecting, collating, and using the data to advance the regional health agenda. The presence of regional knowledge hubs will help to enhance readily access to relevant information, strengthen the regional health investment, and support to inform all health initiatives within the region for maximum efficiency.
- III. **Linking existing public health assets for responding to public health events within the regions through Regional Integrated Surveillance and Laboratory Network (RISLNET):** – To harness the full capacity of existing public health assets, it is critical to network the different capacities and capabilities of Member States, regional bodies and multi-national organizations within each region. RISLNET serves as a mechanism for networking and integrating such assets and efforts for joint preparedness and response to public health events, country capacity building, and exchange of knowledge among Member State countries in each region and beyond.
- IV. **Supporting the implementation of continental strategies within each region** The Agenda 2023 of the African Union aspires for a prosperous and integrated Africa whereby its citizens are healthy, well-nourished, and have long life spans. This is translated and defines the Africa CDC strategic plan. The RCC will ensure the harmonization of initiatives and strategies within the continent while realizing the “Africa CDC without border” that promotes the continental integration agenda.

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