

Strengthening African Union's Health Architecture

Context

The Africa Health Strategy 2016 – 2030 envisions an integrated, inclusive, and prosperous Africa, free from its heavy burden of disease. To achieve this vision, the African Union (AU) has prioritised the building of an effective African-driven response to addressing this challenge. Efforts include strengthening health systems and institutions, leveraging public-private partnerships, improving capacity for local manufacturing through access to technologies, know-how and regulatory capacities, enhancing inter-sectoral actions, and empowering communities.

Pandemics and public health challenges have a tremendous impact on realising Africa's transformation goals. The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) has been at the forefront of Africa's response to the threats of diseases and outbreaks. Strengthening the resilience of frontline regional institutions like the Africa CDC including its Regional Collaborating Centres (RCCs), the Africa Medicines Agency (AMA), African Pharmaceutical Technology Foundation (APTF) amongst others will provide the needed impetus for the attainment of a new public health order for Africa's health security.

Objective

The project objective is to 'strengthen the resilience of Africa CDC and related continental health institutions'. This objective is in line with the Agenda 2063 goal on achieving a safer, healthier, integrated and prosperous Africa, in which Member States can efficiently prevent disease transmission, implement surveillance and detection, and prepare to respond effectively to health threats and outbreaks.

Approach

The project takes a systematic approach to enhancing the institutional and programmatic capacities of the Africa CDC, AMA and the APTF in the following key areas:

1. Strengthening institutional capacities at Africa CDC

The project aims to foster sustainable organisational growth and improved operational effectiveness and efficiency by providing technical advisory services on select organizational functions including finance, administration, human resources, and procurement while strengthening Africa CDC's strategic partnership management. This includes developing a corporate strategy for partnership and resource mobilisation, and digitizing partnership coordination and management processes to enhance efficiency and collaboration.

Project name	Strengthening African Union's Health Architecture (SAHA)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the European Union
Project region	African Union (AU)
Lead executing agency	Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC)
Budget	EUR 23,909,000
Duration	12/2021 – 02/2028

In addition, the project aims to enhance Africa CDC's role as a leading health institution by developing and implementing comprehensive communication strategies. These strategies will streamline efforts, improve coordination, and ensure consistent messaging, enabling Africa CDC to effectively respond to health crises, share vital information, and promote health initiatives across diverse audiences, while fostering public trust and stakeholder collaboration.

2. Strengthening vertical and horizontal cooperation among health institutions

The project provides technical assistance towards enhancing vertical and horizontal cooperation amongst various regional and AU health institutions respectively. Through the support to the Africa CDC – RECs Cooperation, the project helps to leverage the comparative advantages of institutions at the continental and regional levels to control, prevent, detect, and respond to disease threats and outbreaks. In addition, the project enhances capacity, knowledge exchange and networking amongst National Public Health Institutes and supports the operationalisation of the Africa Epidemic Service.

Support is also provided to strengthen the Africa CDC's and other AU health institutions community engagement through institutionalised approaches to youth, women, and civil society engagement in public health decision making on the continent.

3. Strengthening local pharmaceutical manufacturing

The AU has set the goal of increasing regional capacity for pharmaceutical production to locally manufacture 60% of vaccines administered in Africa by 2040. The project aims at improving capacity for local manufacturing through access to technologies, know-how and regulatory capacities on the continent by strengthening the institutional and programmatic capacities of the AMA and the APTF.

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4. Implementation of the Africa CDC Digital Transformation Strategy

The project supports the implementation of the Africa CDC Digital Transformation Strategy by strengthening the Center for Digital Health, promoting knowledge exchange, and enhancing continental coordination through initiatives like the African Digital Health Networks, Health Information Exchange program, and Africa Health Tech Summit. It also addresses the digital health gender gap via the African Women in Digital Health (AWiDH) initiative and fosters youth leadership through the African Youth in Digital Health Network (YiDHN).

5. Strengthening Continental One Health Coordination

The project is jointly implementing the Team Europe Initiative Health Security, Using a One Health Approach with France. Support is provided to Africa CDC's capacities to strengthen the coordination and implementation of the One Health Approach on a continental, regional and national level. Through this approach, the Africa CDC is strengthened in its mandate to drive health security and pandemic preparedness on the continent.

Furthermore, the project supports the continental response efforts to the mpox & marbug outbreaks as well as the implementation of WHO and Africa CDC's joint Continental Preparedness and Response Plan for Africa.

Result

The project contributes to ensuring long and healthy lives and promote the well-being for all in Africa in the context of 'Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want', and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Specifically, the project has:

- Enhanced Africa CDC's programme management capacities through project management trainings delivered to mid level and senior staff members
- Supported the development of the Africa CDC Partnership and Resource Mobilisation Strategy. The strategy will help Africa CDC build sustainable cooperation with strategic partners at national, regional and global levels;
- Contributed to the development of Africa CDC's 5-year strategy for the development of National Public Health Institutes (NPHI) across Africa, ensuring all AU member states have functional institutes performing core public health functions.
- Supported the design and implementation of the AU Bingwa Plus Initiative, an incubator strengthening the project management and implementation capacities of young health champions. This builds on earlier support to the AU COVID-19 Bingwa Initiative which trained and deployed vaccination champions to stimulate massive demand for the COVID-19 vaccine among African youth. The initiative directly reached more than 810.000 people through various vaccination events and another 28.4 million digital campaigns.
- Supported the development of the Africa CDC's Youth Engagement Strategy designed to mobilise, empower, and engage young Africans in shaping the continent's public health future.
- Supported the implementation of the Africa CDC's Digital Transformation Strategy which has led to the establishment of the Africa CDC's Center for Digital Health.

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