

From Vision to Reality: Advancing Resilient Health Research in Africa Through a Hub-and-Spoke Guidance Workshop

31 Oct 2025 | Updates | 5 min read | Admin



Public health threats call for responses that are both efficient and sustainable. From East to West, North to South, we are reminded that borders do not divide us in times of global health emergencies—such as pandemics—as everyone becomes vulnerable to its consequences. Thus, the constant possibility of global health emergencies recurring requires that we have the capacity for unified, collective action. And for such global collaboration to be truly effective in its efficiency and sustainability, it must be built on a foundation of equitable capacities across all continents, enabling every region to contribute meaningfully and keep pace.

In light of this, the **International Vaccine Institute (IVI)** supported **Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC)**'s workshop dedicated to hosting prominent stakeholders—i.e., public health leaders, researchers, and institutional stakeholders from across the African continent,—which was convened on 27 to 29 August 2025 the **Noom Hotel Abidjan Plateau, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire**. Participants gathered to engage in collaborative discussions on co-creating strategies to enhance health research capacity in Africa. At the core of their talks, it was evident that there was a shared vision for the future of African countries' place in global health: an African-led, resilient health research infrastructure that would enable effective governance and

capacity to respond to public health issues.

To realize this vision, it was evident that operationalizing the Hub & Spokes framework was necessary, as this model would bridge institutions of varying capacities. This model facilitates a collaborative research approach, ensuring regional balance and a sustainable mechanism for public health readiness. Overall, it would strengthen African countries to engage more effectively and autonomously in global health matters.

Photo taken during a session presented by Dr. Elvis on the first day of the workshop

Critical themes and priorities that were discussed and highlighted amongst invited experts were:

Constructing hubs and spokes centers to steer and expedite coordinated research in areas
Deploying mobile units to extend into distant and underserved communities
Executing strong governance and ethics management systems, with a call for long-term political will and domestic investment
Enhancing translational research to support health policies, systems, and real-world public health impact

At the workshop, key speakers — **Prof. Florian, Dr. Elvis, Prof. Samba, Mr. Moses, Dr. Asma,** and **Dr. Solomon** — provided expert views on key matters, including:

Mapping and categorizing research institutions in Africa
Ranking research agendas driven by Africans
Building institutional capacity through digital platforms and collaboration
Incorporating research into epidemic preparedness and response frameworks

Generally, based on their expertise, it is crucial to map and categorize in an organized, collaborative manner when establishing Hub & Spokes, while ensuring these institutions are led and oriented towards the African agenda.

Breakout sessions with workshop participants were also held, during which invaluable insights were gained. The invited stakeholders provided perspectives on why it was critical to categorize roles and responsibilities among hubs, spokes, and mobile units, and explored what those roles and responsibilities could look like. Other key points brought up during the breakout sessions included:

Developing standardized criteria for spoke-to-hub transition
Emphasizing geographic disparities in access to research and capability
Sets performance monitoring indicators and frameworks
Fosters mentorship opportunities, training programs, and collaborations

Notably, the session was talk-backed by action—a statement of Africa's determination to take control of its health research destiny on the grounds of regional leadership, Indigenous knowledge, and strategic partnerships.

For IVI, it was both an honour and a privilege to be invited to support Africa CDC in organizing their workshop. Looking ahead, IVI is dedicated to providing support that will help the workshop outcomes establish an inclusive, accountable, and effective continental R&D network. The ultimate aim is to turn powerful and prospective ideas from conception to reality.

Photo taken during a plenary session on the second day of the workshop

Group photo taken on the first day of the workshop