

Beyond the Test Tube:

Environmental Sampling as the Catalyst for Waste Safety



Management of medical waste is an ongoing challenge for many African countries. Notably, the management of liquid laboratory waste is topical as analysers produce a lot of liquid waste from routine testing. In response to this, ASLM has conducted training programs for country teams, developing resources such as checklists and guidelines and knowledge sharing on platforms such as ECHO sessions on laboratory waste management.

On 15-18 July 2025, the EU CBRN Centers of Excellence Initiative's Project 99: "Strengthening Biosafety and Biosecurity Capabilities in East and Central Africa," funded by the European Commission and implemented by a consortium led by Expertise France (including ULG, RIVM, SCJS, and ISEMI), held a regional meeting in Dar es Salaam, organized to bring together representatives from the eleven partner countries — Burundi, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Seychelles, Uganda, Rwanda, and Zambia to strengthen national waste management efforts. The training covered important elements of environmental sampling such as developing a sampling plan, the importance of assembling a team with the required expertise prior to sampling. Templates were also provided to the trainees to support rigorous data collection and sample tracking. Environmental sampling is essential during disease outbreaks when environmental reservoirs (e.g., water, air, surfaces) are suspected sources of transmission. Training ensures that samples are collected, cultured, and interpreted using scientifically sound protocols, enabling accurate linkage between environmental and clinical isolates.

Next Steps

- Leverage on the strengths of the regional network formed at this meeting.
- Continue to advocate for safe waste management practices that limit environmental contamination and share best practices around sampling.
- The Zambia Biosafety and Biosecurity Technical working group is scheduled to hold a waste management training of trainers incorporating key information and tools from this workshop.



From Guidance to Action:

Domestication of Africa CDC's HCATs Guidance in Lusaka

Select agents' lists play an important role in fostering trade and protecting health security across borders. The WHO JEE conducted in October 2023 in Zambia - highlighted the gap in a comprehensive system for the management of high consequence agents and toxins. A national select agent list, or list of High Consequence Agents and Toxins (HCATs) is essential for risk prioritization and resource allocation, ensuring compliance with international obligations and enhancing early warning and surveillance systems, mitigating dual use risks. Development

of national select agents list or list of high consequence agents and toxins (HCATs) in member states remains one of the strategic plan priorities under the [AFRICA CDC Biosafety and Biosecurity Initiative](#).

To support this biosafety and biosecurity priority area, AFRICA CDC developed a comprehensive guidance document for listing and managing HCATs including their bio surveillance which has been domesticated in several African countries. This document was domesticated in Lusaka, Zambia on 11-

15 August 2025, through the National Biosafety and Biosecurity Technical working group which gathered experts across the one health sector to support this work. During the official opening of the meeting the Permanent Secretary Technical Servies at the Ministry of Health, Dr Kennedy Lishimpi, highlighted the importance of the output in strengthening the Biosafety and Biosecurity systems in the country for health resilience.

Next Steps

- Finalize select agents list
- Launch domesticated framework
- Implement awareness raising programs that support the responsible use of science.



Uniting for Progress: Key Regional and International Initiatives

News highlights, events, and updates on biosecurity and health security in the region or topical to the region. Note that these are not exhaustive.

- The Southern Africa Regional Biosafety and Biosecurity technical working group is scheduled for September 2025, look out for updates from those engaging discussions.
- The [ASLM LABCOP](#) annual meeting will be held on 22-24 October in Nairobi under the theme “Sustaining Laboratory Gains in Challenging Times”.
- ASLM is seeking 9 Section Editors in Diagnostics, Infectious Diseases, Anatomical Pathology, Genomics, and Emerging Technologies. [Apply here](#) by 31 August.
- The European Congress on infection prevention and control to be held on 16-19 September. [Register here](#).
- Join the virtual multi-Stakeholder Consultations on the establishment of the independent panel on Evidence for Action against Antimicrobial resistance (AMR). [Bit.ly/4197aHj](#)
- SAVE THE DATE: AFRICA CDC will be holding the International Conference on Public Health in Africa on 23-25 October in Durban, South Africa.
- The IBSA foundation for scientific research has opened its 2025 call for applications. Great opportunity for young Biomedical researchers. Find more information [here](#).
- The official SABBN website has been launched!! [follow the linked in page as well](#).