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CEPI, IVI and MRC Unit The Gambia to bolster clinical research capacity in West Africa to combat regional viral threat

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To strengthen sustainable clinical research capacity and long-term outbreak preparedness

The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), the Republic of Korea-based International Vaccine Institute (IVI) and Gambia's Medical Research Council Unit The Gambia (MRCG) have announced the launch of the Research Preparedness Program West Africa (RPPWA).

IVI, as the 'Technical Coordinating Partner', alongside MRCG will co-lead the RPPWA, supporting a consortium of regional stakeholders to bolster the capacity of clinical research sites across West Africa to conduct large-scale clinical trials of vaccines against Lassa fever and future disease outbreaks which might threaten the region.

Supported by $3.9 million of CEPI funding, the RPPWA will lay the groundwork for the first-ever high-quality, multi-country Phase 2b and Phase 3 trials to evaluate the efficacy of Lassa vaccines. Such trials are a prerequisite to a Lassa vaccine being approved by regulatory authorities, and can only take place in countries in West Africa where the potentially deadly virus is circulating.

The RPPWA will work with partners across the region to strengthen existing clinical trial infrastructure in West Africa, while also establishing additional Good Clinical Practice-compliant Phase 2b/3 trial facilities capable of conducting the crucial research that will advance a Lassa vaccine on its path to licensure.

The RPPWA will also support long-term outbreak preparedness in the region by helping to prepare sustainable clinical trial facilities that can rapidly generate vaccine data against future viral threats, primarily through strengthening existing research capacity. The consortium will build upon the clinical trial infrastructure developed to conduct Phase 2b and Phase 3 Lassa fever vaccine trials in the region and develop procedures, governance structures and pre-agreed clinical trial protocols that would enable rapid evidence generation in response to outbreaks of known and unknown pathogens.