

The Health Technologies Advocacy Project

African leaders recognize that technology is key to accelerating the continent's development trajectory as envisioned in the African Union (AU)'s Agenda 2063 and long-term national development strategies. The emerging complex transformational technologies such as genetically modified mosquitoes, mRNA/DNA vaccines, RNAi, drones, and artificial intelligence have high potential to change the trajectory of disease and general well-being if they are successfully developed and effectively deployed. However, there is a wariness in adopting the technologies because of a lack of understanding and buy-in by the public, local scholars, policymakers, and other development actors during the development and deployment of the technologies. The challenge is compounded by lack of clear policies and regulatory pathways on how to deploy the technologies at scale and proliferation of concerns leveled against them in the media and through influencer channels.

Led by the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), the Health Technologies Advocacy project aims to create an African driven advocacy platform —the Health Tech Platform (HTP)— to facilitate informed, objective, transparent, gender inclusive, open and balanced discussions on development and use of transformational tools and technologies to address key health challenges in sub-Saharan Africa. The overall purpose of the project is to ensure that Africans are meaningfully involved in driving conversations about the need for transformational tools and technologies, their design, development, testing, and uptake by governments, other development actors, and communities, including youth and women. The project will employ multi-pronged advocacy approaches and tools to meaningfully engage a wide range of stakeholders including policymakers, scientists, academics, ethicists, gender experts, media/journalists, and civil society actors on the need and widespread use of transformative technologies to address various health challenges.

The primary outcome that the project seeks to realize is: Increased African leadership in promoting discourses and actions on the development and use of transformative technologies and tools (TTs) for tackling health challenges in Africa. Three intermediate outcomes will contribute to the realization of the primary outcome, namely:

1. Increased understanding, commitment and action by policymakers to facilitate the development and use of transformative technologies/tools for tackling health challenges at national and regional levels in Africa
2. Increased voices and engagement of African scientists, media, development experts, and CSOs in discourses to promote development and use of transformative technologies/tools for tackling health challenges in Africa at national, regional and global levels
3. Strengthened advocacy capacity of African Institutions in promoting discourses and actions on the development and use of transformative technologies and tools for tackling health challenges in Africa