

From strategy to solidarity: How Nigeria's 2025–2029 plan advances leadership and regional collaboration for Lassa fever in West Africa

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Introduction

Lassa fever (LF) poses persistent public health threat in West Africa. In Nigeria, it accounts for over 70% of the regional disease burden with increased frequency and geographic spread during seasonal outbreaks, overwhelming the health system. Despite growing response efforts, the absence of a national strategic plan in endemic countries has undermined long term sustainability. This abstract outlines the development and regional relevance of Nigeria's first comprehensive Lassa Fever Strategic Plan (2025–2029)

Methods

The NCDC through the National Lassa fever Technical Working Group (LFTWG) led a multi stakeholder One Health driven strategy development from 2018 to 2022. This included consultative meetings, workshops, and a final validation forum. Contributors involved focal persons drawn across 10 pillars of the LFTWG; high burden states; LGAs; treatment centres; LF diagnostic labs, state and federal ministries of health, agriculture and environment, academia and relevant departments and agencies.

Results

The strategy draws from 55+ years of surveillance data, reports from LF outbreaks in Nigeria and aligns with the WHO LF Research and Development (R&D) Roadmap (2019), the strategy aims to reduce Nigeria's LF CFR to below 10% by 2029 through 23 objectives across 10 pillars. Total budget is estimated at \$76 million USD, with 52% allocated to the first two years and driven largely by logistics and supply chain needs (50%). Sustained funding depends on collective multisectoral collaboration, domestic resource mobilization, and public private partnerships, driven by country governance. Regional mechanisms, including joint rapid response teams (RRTs), surveillance harmonization, and pooled financing, are integral for successful implementation.

Conclusion

Nigeria's 2025–2029 Lassa Fever Strategic Plan offers a model for embedding epidemic preparedness into national health policy while fostering regional collaboration. Platforms such as the Lassa Fever Governing Entity and ECOWAS are essential for coordinating governance, funding,



and programmatic delivery—ensuring more resilient, coordinated epidemic responses across West Africa.