



## EU-Africa PerMed Press Release 1<sup>st</sup> Stakeholder workshop

9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> February 2022

The EU-Africa PerMed project, Building Links between Europe and Africa in Personalised is a 4 year action project funded by the European Commission Horizon 2020 programme that seeks to facilitate and strengthen Research and Innovation collaboration between Europe and Africa in Personalised Medicine (PM), fostering joint projects and programmes as well as facilitating the participation of African organizations in the international Consortium for Personalized Medicine (ICPerMed). The project was launched in February 2021 and is implemented by a consortium of 13 partners: 6 from Europe and 7 from Africa. The consortium members are annexed.

Exactly into 1 year of project implementation, the consortium has held its first virtual stakeholder workshop themed **"IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITISING PERSONALISED MEDICINE NEEDS IN AFRICA"** from 9th -10th February 2022, which was hosted by the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), Kenya. The event brought together all consortium institutions, representatives from the African Union Commission and the European Community, seasoned researchers from both Europe and Africa, policy makers and representatives from pharmaceutical and Science and Innovation industries as well as the World Health Organization. All in all, more than 150 people from all over the two continents attended the workshop and actively participated in the discussions.

**Opening the stakeholder workshop were NACOSTI and the European Commission (EC).** During her opening remarks, Ms. Irene Norsted from the EC gave an overview on the vision of the European Commission and its role in promoting Personalised Medicine, especially in building international links. In her speech, she reiterated on the importance of overcoming global health challenges through collaboration, as shown through the COVID-19 international collaboration.

Professor Oyawa, the CEO of NACOSTI, who welcome the participants, commented on the interest of the consortium to host the stakeholder workshop, however due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions this was not possible, especially with the surge of Omicron cases. In his opening remarks, Prof. Oyawa also touched on the interest Kenya has to incorporate PM as a priority for Research and Innovation (R&I) in the country and

pointed out some challenges faced by African states “the high usage of traditional medicine” vis-à-vis modern approaches such as PM. He also acknowledged the collaboration with the understanding that this will bring insights on how to embrace new models to modern medicine.

Jean-Paul Sanne, a policy officer from the EC gave as an overview of the different actions and programmes that the EC has launched to develop PM, starting from the launching of the [ICPerMed](#). He highlighted Europe’s strategy for international cooperation in R&I to address Global health issues, which led to the birth of the EU-Africa PerMed. He highlighted that project is seen as a starting point, to help launch a deeper collaboration with Africa, activities between both regions in Pm should go beyond of this project.

An excellent key note presentation was made by Dr. Michele Ramsay, presenting her vision of PM in Africa, highlighting the importance of having good data from Africa’s diversity, not only genetic data. She pointed out not only the challenges of PM in Africa but also the benefits and the added value of implementing PM in Africa.

Dr. Ramsay’s presentation was followed by a presentation from Monika Frenkel, who introduced the aims and activities of ICPerMed, a very good example of how to foster international research collaboration and implementation of PM.

The second part of the morning was focused on getting an overview of PM in Africa, with talks from Northern, West, Southern and Central Africa. During this session, WHO and AUDA-NEPAD gave their vision, deepening the understanding on Africa’s progress in implementing PM and how PM can be included in Pan -African health research strategies.

The second day of the workshop was devoted to in-depth discussions to better identify PM needs and opportunities in Africa, using as a starting point the results of the pre-workshop survey. Also, the South Africa Precision Medicine Programme was showcased as an example of initiatives taken at country level.

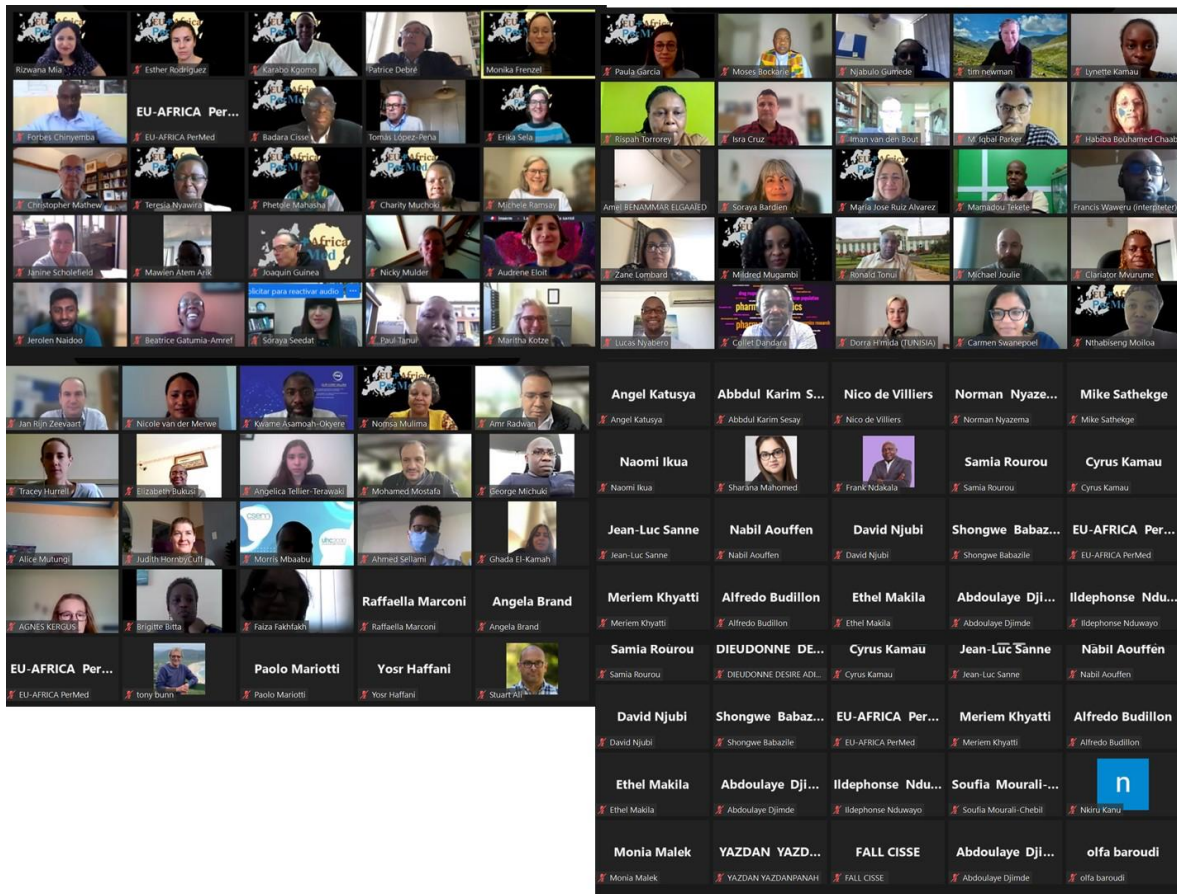
The agenda was completed by a roundtable that gathered eminent scientists who discussed the opportunities the EU-AU collaboration may bring in respect to Personalised Medicine, and how these opportunities can be addressed, i.e focusing first at regional level, imitating role models such as EDCTP and rethinking the north-south relationship, to enable sustainable solutions for PM implementation.

Some of the key take home messages to support implementation of PM in Africa touched on the following:

1. The importance of thinking through Africa-to-Africa Collaboration, beyond the EU-Africa collaboration.

2. The need for more political will from the countries and leadership from Regional Economic/health communities to advance PM in Africa, such as the need for WHO to give their vision on PM in Africa.
3. That some countries are ready for PM but others need more time, and this should be taken into consideration to enhance regional approach.
4. That there is also a difference in term of Genetic diversity within regions (ie. Egypt in North Africa), therefore taking into account the genetic differences beyond geographic demarcations is also important.
5. Education, training and funding are also important aspects to advance in PM. That platforms do exist and they need some focused funding. Countries that are more developed in PM to be considered as COEs for training other Africa countries lagging behind.

For further information, please contact: [info@euafrica-permed.eu](mailto:info@euafrica-permed.eu)



## List of institutions forming the EU-Africa Permed consortium

- 1 Sociedad para el Fomento de la Innovación Tecnológica INNOVATEC, Spain.
- 2 Ministry of Health, International Research Programmes and Institutional Relations, Italy
- 3 European Clinical Research Infrastructure Network ECRIN, France.
- 4 National Research Agency ANR, France
- 5 Carlos III Health Institute ISCIII, Spain.
- 6 National Institute of Health and Medical Research INSERM, France.
- 7 Egyptian Center for Innovation & Technology Development ECITD, Egypt.
- 8 South African Medical Research Council SA-MRC, South Africa.
- 9 Institute for Health Research, Epidemiological Surveillance and Training (IRESSEF)
- 10 African Population & Health Research Centre APHRC, Kenya
- 11 East, Central, And Southern African Health Community ECSA-HC, Tanzania
- 12 National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation NACOSTI, Kenya.
- 13 African Union-New Partnership for Africa's Development AUDA-NEPAD, South Africa.