



D4.1– Action Plan for the involvement of African countries in ICPeMed and ERA PerMed

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Executive summary

This document describes the Action Plan of the EU-Africa PerMed project for the involvement of African countries in ICPeMed and ERA PerMed. The deliverable considers expected outcomes/KPIs of the project for this dedicated aspect and work package.





Action Plan for the involvement of African countries in ICPeMed and ERA PerMed

1. INTRODUCTION

In order to support the objective of encouraging the integration of non-EU countries in ICPeMed, and following the challenges and scopes defined in the topic "Actions in support of the International Consortium for Personalised Medicine" (H2020 framework programme), the EU-Africa PerMed project has the final objective of integrating African countries into ICPeMed activities and the ERA-NET Cofund for Personalised Medicine (ERA PerMed). Therewith, EU-Africa PerMed contributes to a successful implementation of personalised medicine (PM) in the global context, fosters joint PM projects and programmes between Europe and Africa, as well as strengthens bilateral EU-AU science, technology and innovation (STI) relations in the area of health, towards a common approach to PM research, innovation, development and implementation.

On the long run, incorporating African countries in the global PM research agenda can contribute to shortening the existing health disparities between developed and developing countries, as well as facilitating the access of African countries to new tools and technologies that have the potential to make healthcare more efficient and equitable. EU-Africa PerMed will work towards fostering a stronger global collaboration in PM through the umbrella of ICPeMed, and by this, to better tackle global health challenges such as infectious diseases and future pandemics.

This deliverable describes the different activities of the project EU-Africa PerMed to achieve its objectives and particularly objective 3:

OBJECTIVE 3: To foster and facilitate the integration of health research funding and policy organisations from African Union (AU) countries in the ICPeMed consortium, through the participation of representatives of these organisations in workshops, conferences and related events and in ongoing collaborative funding actions such as ERA PerMed.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION: ICPERMED AND ERA PERMED

The International Consortium for Personalised Medicine – ICPeMed was initiated in 2016 during several workshops organised by the European Commission (EC). ICPeMed has become a valuable platform for the collaboration between EU Member States, associated countries and non-European countries, to implement priority actions in PM research in a coordinated way, as defined in the ICPeMed Action Plan (2017)¹. It also serves as a platform to foster the development of further bilateral and multilateral initiatives in the area of PM. It promotes state-of-the art understanding and new advances in the PM domain by facilitating the exchange of experiences and ideas, and by discussing new potential solutions from ICPeMed members and global stakeholders.

ICPeMed welcomes international, non-European organisations that can join the consortium as members or observers. Currently, ICPeMed brings together 46 public and private 'not-for-profit' health research funding and policy organisations from 30 countries and seven regions from four continents. Two Canadian organisations (Canadian Institute of health Research and Genome British Columbia), the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation from Brazil and the Iran Ministry of Health and Medical Education are members of the consortium.

¹ <https://www.icpermed.eu/en/activities-action-plan.php>



The European Research Area Network for Personalised Medicine (ERA-Net), ERA PerMed, is a funding programme for collaborative and innovative research projects in the field of PM and receives co-funding through the EC. ERA PerMed aligns regional and national research strategies, promotes excellence, reinforces the competitiveness of European players in PM, and enhances the European collaboration with non-EU countries. New funding organisations, including those of non-EU countries, can join at any time and participate in the annual Joint Transnational Calls (JTC). With, in total, 42 participating funding organisations, including regional, national and international funders of 32 countries and five continents, ERA PerMed is the largest ERA-Net in the health sector.

ERA PerMed offers African organisations to participate in PM joint funding activities. The Academy of Scientific Research & Technology (ASRT), a non-profit organisation affiliated to the Ministry of Scientific Research of Egypt, joined successfully the ERA PerMed JTC2019, 2020 and 2021.²

ICPerMed works in close collaboration with ERA PerMed, several Coordination and Support Actions (CSAs) funded by the EC. This so called **ICPerMed 'Family'**³ has an important role in supporting the research and implementation of PM in Europe and beyond. EU-Africa PerMed is part of this family and the fourth CSA focussing on international collaboration, besides EULAC-PerMed, "Widening EU-LAC policy and research cooperation in Personalised Medicine", strengthening collaboration of Europe with Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries, and two CSAs fostering collaboration between Europe and China: SINO-EU PerMed, "Cooperation between China and Europe in Personalised Medicine" and IC2PerMed, "Integrating China in the International Consortium for Personalised Medicine".

3. EU-AFRICA PERMED ACTIVITIES TOWARDS THE INTEGRATION OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN ICPERMED AND ERA PERMED

To achieve the objective 3, EU-Africa PerMed will act on three different levels:

- I. Presenting ICPerMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPerMed family to the African communities;
- II. Integrating the African perspective in activities on European and international level and particularly those of ICPerMed and ERA PerMed as well as the ICPerMed family;
- III. Developing common dissemination and communication activities between EU-Africa PerMed, ICPerMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPerMed family.

The planned activities are described in more detail below.

Presenting ICPerMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPerMed family to the African communities

EU-Africa PerMed will enable a two-way dialogue: ICPerMed will be presented to African countries as a platform allowing African stakeholders to learn from other countries about PM research and implementation, for gaining new perspectives, approaches and research opportunities for the African countries. The very same time, the ICPerMed platform will be presented as opportunity for African countries: Participation of African countries in ICPerMed, ERA PerMed or ICPerMed family activities is beneficial, for example, to share information about activities and best practices of their countries and to bring their countries as well as the African PM perspective into the global agenda.

² As output of EU-Africa PerMed activities (Task 4.1): The SAMRC (South Africa) participated in the JTC2022 of ERA PerMed.

³ <https://www.icpermed.eu/en/related-initiatives.php>



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A starting point are also the project partners of EU-Africa PerMed. They will be duly informed about ICPeMed and ERA PerMed through the Toolkit developed by WP6 but also through the presentation of both initiative during EU-Africa PerMed internal meetings. The Toolkit provides the necessary supporting material to EU-Africa PerMed consortium members about ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPeMed family for dissemination among their networks.

EU-Africa PerMed will share information about ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPeMed family with African stakeholder through different means:

- Dedicated information events organised for African stakeholders for presenting ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPeMed family, e.g. webinar format or physical events;
- Presentation of ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPeMed family through dedicated talks during EU-Africa PerMed meetings and events (e.g. stakeholder workshops, information days, webinars, training activities, summer schools, etc.);
- Presentation of the different initiatives to dedicated stakeholders that are identified, for example, through the WP2 and other mapping activities or through EU-Africa PerMed events. For this purpose, bilateral meetings between EU-Africa PerMed and African organisations will be organised.
- Presentation of ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPeMed family in external meetings in Africa where relevant stakeholders meet.
- Sharing of information regarding ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPeMed family (general information but also activities of the initiatives) through the different EU-Africa PerMed communication and dissemination means (e.g. website, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.).

Via EU-Africa PerMed, African institutions will get introduced and will be consistently and regularly informed about ICPeMed activities e.g.

- the ICPeMed communication/dissemination activities and collaboration tools like the ICPeMed partnering tool and the ICPeMed funding database,
- the ICPeMed Recognition,
- the collection of examples of good practice,
- ICPeMed and ICPeMed-related initiatives events.

Integrating the African perspective in activities on European and international level and particularly those of ICPeMed and ERA PerMed as well as the ICPeMed family

EU-Africa PerMed has a good knowledge and understanding of the different European initiatives and direct collaborations and engagements with ICPeMed and ERA PerMed are already established.

A direct and straightforward linkage between the different initiatives already exists, as three partners from the EU-Africa PerMed consortium (ANR, ISCIII and It-MoH) are full members of the ICPeMed consortium and are also part of the CSA ICPeMed Secretariat. The coordination of ERA PerMed is located at ISCIII while the funders consortium (Network Steering Committee) is chaired by ANR.

EU-Africa PerMed is already part of the ICPeMed family. Several EU-Africa PerMed partners, i.e. Innovatec, ECRIN, but also IT-MoH and ISCIII are also involved in other coordination and support actions that are part of the ICPeMed family:



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- The CSA PERMIT⁴, “PERsonalised Medicine Trials”, addresses questions related to personalised medicine clinical studies and trial design;
- The CSA EULAC PerMed⁵, “Widening EU-LAC policy and research cooperation in Personalised Medicine”, focussing on international collaboration with Caribbean and Latin American countries.

Broadening the geographical scope of ICPeMed and ERA PerMed will contribute to a better and fairer implementation of PM approaches into the health systems for the benefit of patients, citizens and society as a whole.

In detail, EU-Africa PerMed will foster and facilitate:

1. the integration of African organisations in the ICPeMed consortium.

Activities to achieve this aim:

- identify and engage with African ministries, health research funding agencies, foundations or private organisations, at both, the regional and national level to present the ICPeMed consortium.
- Bilateral face to face and/or web-meetings will be organised with interested African organisations to advance in the understanding of what ICPeMed offers and how to participate as member or observer or as part of the Stakeholder Forum. EU-Africa PerMed will provide the necessary information to understand the ICPeMed requirements for participation and support interested organisations in the administrative steps to be taken, e.g. preparation of documents as “letter of interest”, etc.

2. the participation of African organisations in ERA PerMed joint funding activities.

Activities to achieve this aim:

- identifying, contacting and exchanging with African ministries and funding organisations and introducing ERA PerMed to those stakeholders.
- The project will facilitate the participation of African funding agencies in future calls of ERA PerMed, explaining the concept of the ERA-Net as funding programme, how it is organised and how African countries can participate and benefit from joining international research consortia. EU-Africa PerMed will support the exchange of ERA PerMed with African organisations that are interested in participating in joint funding activities.

3. the participation of African organisations, stakeholders and experts in ICPeMed and ERA PerMed activities.

Activities to achieve this aim:

- encouraging and supporting African representatives to participate in and propose African experts and speakers for workshops, conferences and other types of events.
- Propose African stakeholders for working groups, expert or evaluation panels and other activities.

⁴ <https://ecrin.org/activities/permit-project>

⁵ <https://www.eulac-permed.eu/>



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- EU-Africa PerMed will inform the African stakeholders about opportunities for sharing of knowledge and leveraging of activities (e.g. in form of good practices as “Best Practice Examples” presented through ICPeMed and through the “ICPeMed Recognition”).
- encourage the participation of African stakeholders in training events or webinars organised by ICPeMed, ERA PerMed or the ICPeMed family.
- administrative and financial support for the attendance of African representatives in ICPeMed related events (e.g. participation in Executive Committee meetings, workshops and/or conferences) (WP1).

4. the integration of the African PM perspective in strategic reflections (international level).

EU-Africa PerMed will help to identify priority topics for African countries and propose their potential inclusion in future ICPeMed strategic papers as Action Plans, roadmaps etc. and reflections, e.g. for a future European Partnership in PM in the framework of Horizon Europe.

Activities to achieve this aim:

- presenting EU-Africa PerMed activities and outcomes to ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPeMed family, e.g. through oral presentations. Dedicated events are organised for this purpose by ICPeMed: ICPeMed family events (2021 and 2023) and ICPeMed family CSA meetings (biannually). Additional opportunities: the ICPeMed workshops (2022 and 2023) and the ICPeMed conference (2022).
- sharing of documents developed by the project or communicating on the progress of the project, e.g. through the ICPeMed and ERA PerMed newsletters.
- EU-Africa PerMed activities and progress will be presented biannually to the ICPeMed consortium through an ambassador system, i.e. one elected ICPeMed member is reporting on the EU-Africa PerMed project during each meeting of the ICPeMed Executive Committee meeting. The organisation acting as ambassador is ANR who is also WP4 and task 4.1 co-lead.
- encouraging and supporting African representatives and stakeholders to participate in and propose African experts, e.g. as speakers, for workshops, conferences and other types of events.

Developing common communication and dissemination activities between EU-Africa PerMed, ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPeMed family

Through WP4 and WP6, a close collaboration is established with ICPeMed and ERA PerMed including common communication and dissemination activities e.g. through news presented on the websites or social media communications (i.e. Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube), common communication material (e.g. promotion videos), events and other activities of EU-Africa PerMed, ICPeMed or the ICPeMed family. EU-Africa PerMed will use the opportunity to report on its activities in the ICPeMed newsletter that is published quarterly.

4. EXPECTED OUTPUT, IMPACT AND CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABILITY

The short-term impact of WP4, i.e. the expected direct output of WP4 activities and expected achievements towards the project objective 3, are translated into WP4 specific **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**:



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- Number of African organisations that joined the ICPeMed consortium at the end of the project (target: at least 3).
- Number of African organisations participating in ICPeMed activities (target: at least 6).
- Number of bilateral meetings with African organisations to discuss their participation in ICPeMed/ERA PerMed (target: at least 3 meetings in years 2, 3 and 4).
- Number of African organisations participating in ERA PerMed future calls (target: at least 2).
- Number of EU-Africa PerMed meetings with ICPeMed participation (target: at least 3).

Three milestones were set, to follow-up on the progress of collaboration between EU-Africa PerMed and ICPeMed/ERA PerMed:

Milestones		
Nº	Name	Due date
MS4	Communication channels between the project and ICPeMed arranged	M8
MS8	Presentation of the ICPeMed and ERA PerMed in the first workshop	M12
MS9	Presentation of EU-Africa PerMed in ICPeMed	M12-M14

All milestones have been already achieved the moment this Action Plan is established.

Expected outputs to that WP4 will contribute but that are not only related to WP4 but also other WP activities:

- Participation in external events organised by different stakeholders to present the EU-Africa PerMed project and the results (target: at least 4 events/per year; 2 in Europe and 2 in Africa).
- Stakeholder workshops bringing together EU-Africa PerMed partners, representatives of ICPeMed and ERA PerMed, African policy makers, funders, researchers, clinicians, private business and patients (target: at least 60 attendees, including representatives of ICPeMed and ERA PerMed).

Long-term impact to that WP4 contributes:

EU-Africa PerMed aims to fosters the integration of the African perspective in the global PM research agenda through the participation of African organisations in currently running initiatives as ICPeMed and related initiatives, such as the ERA PerMed. Through their participation in those initiatives, the African stakeholders and therewith the African PM perspective will be integrated in future activities, i.e. the European Partnership for Personalised Medicine, EP PerMed, under Horizon Europe (expected 2023-2030). EU-Africa PerMed therewith supports sustainable collaboration between Europe and Africa that will continue even after the project ends.

In a long-term perspective, WP4 will contribute to global objectives, i.e. the UN Sustainable Development Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Strengthening the collaboration between Europe and Africa in PM may also accelerate individual country’s progress on health-related sustainable development goals, and in this regard, the EU-Africa PerMed project will contribute to this important health endeavour. No KPIs was developed for this objective as its achievement cannot be attributed to one single action.