

D4.2 Report (mid-term) on interactions of EU-Africa PerMed, ICPerMed, ERA PerMed and the Africa-EU Partnership

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document describes the activities and results of interactions of EU-Africa PerMed with ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the Africa EU-Partnership since the beginning of the project until month 27 of the project (April 2023). These activities are included in WP4 of the project, *Translating Science to Policy – enhancing the dialogue between African countries and Europe in collaboration with ICPeMed and ERA PerMed*, which run throughout the whole life of the project.

WP4 has as one of its main objectives: To foster and facilitate the integration of African Union countries in the ICPeMed consortium, which is also one of the main objectives of EU-Africa PerMed project.

During the first 27 months of the project (Feb 2021-April 2023), many activities have been carried out related to this objective, that are summarised in this deliverable. Activities include mainly:

- Presenting ICPeMed and ERA-PerMed to African stakeholders, contributing to raise awareness of these initiatives among African organizations and support its final integration in ICPeMed and participating in Joint Funding calls (ERA PerMed). These presentations have taken place during all the EU-Africa PerMed Events (information days, stakeholder workshops, regional meetings, summers schools), but also in external events in which the project as a whole or individual members of the consortium have participated.
- Participation in ICPeMed events, to bring the perspective of the African Continent to the discussions, specially when Internationalisation aspects of PM were discussed.
- Joint communications and dissemination activities with ICPeMed, including videos, information in the Newsletters, social media posts (Twitter and LinkedIn), etc.

We would like to highlight as important results already achieved from WP4 the following:

- The SAMRC officially joined ICPeMed as a formal member in October 2022, the first African member to join the consortium.
- The participation of the South African Medical Research Council SAMRC in the Joint Transnational Call 2022 of ERA PerMed. Important to mention that that a project coordinated by a South African Researcher funded by the SAMRC¹, has been selected for funding from the ERA PerMed Transnational Joint call 2022. This is a tangible result from our project work, as the SAMRC joined the ERA PerMed in 2022, after joining the EU-Africa PerMed project.

Another important objective of WP4 is the contribution to the EU-AU Policy Dialogue and support to the Africa-EU Partnership. This document also reports on the activities carried out to interact with this High Level Policy Dialogue, as well as participating in related policy events, mainly linked to the AU-EU Innovation Agenda.

¹ **OPTIMA:** Omics approach for Personalised prevention of Type 2 diabetes mellitus for African and European populations. Coordinated by Julia H. Goedecke, SAMRC/University of the Witwatersrand, with partners from Germany and Sweden.



Report (mid-term) on interactions of EU-Africa PerMed, ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the Africa-EU Partnership

INTRODUCTION

1. Report justification and objective

The EU-Africa PerMed project has, as one of its main objectives, to support the integration of African countries into ICPeMed activities as a means to contribute to the implementation of Personalised Medicine (PM) in the global context, fostering joint PM projects and programmes between Europe and Africa, and strengthening bilateral EU-AU collaborations in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in health.

EU-Africa PerMed is working towards a common approach to PM research, development, innovation, and implementation, 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. On the long run, incorporating African countries in the global PM research agenda can contribute to shorten existing health disparities between developed and developing countries, as well as facilitating access of African countries to new tools and technologies that have the potential make healthcare more efficient and equitable.

In order to fulfil this aim, EU-Africa PerMed has planned a specific Work Package *Translating Science to Policy – enhancing the dialogue between African countries and Europe in collaboration with ICPeMed and ERA PerMed* (WP4), with two specific tasks closely linked to this objective:

- Task 4.1: Integration of AU countries in the ICPeMed consortium and in ERA PerMed. [M7-M48].
 - Subtask 4.1.1. Integration of AU countries in the ICPeMed consortium.
 - Subtask 4.1.2 Integration of AU countries in ERA PerMed.
- Task 4.3: Contribution to the EU-AU Policy Dialogue and support to the Africa-EU Partnership [M7-M48].

Consequently, this deliverable *will report on the activities carried in out* in this Task 4.1 and Task 4.3.

Knowing what has been accomplished so far will allow strengthening those actions that have given the expected results and focusing on those that need further improvement. For this reason, this report has the objective to describe the activities and results of interactions of EU-Africa PerMed with ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and with the Africa EU-Partnership since the beginning of the project (February 2021) until month 27 of the project (April 2023).

2. Context information: short description of ICPeMed, ERA PerMed, ICPeMed Family and Africa-EU Partnership

2.1. Short description of ICPeMed

The International Consortium for Personalised Medicine – ICPeMed was initiated in 2016 during several workshops organised by the European Commission (EC). It 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)². It also serves as a platform to foster the development of further bilateral and multilateral initiatives in PM area. ICPeMed 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 its members and global stakeholders.

ICPeMed welcomes international, non-European organisations, that can join the consortium as members or observers. Currently, ICPeMed brings almost 49 public and private 'not-for-profit' health research funding and policy organisations from 31 countries and seven regions from four continents. Considering international collaboration, three Canadian organisations (Canadian Institute of Health Research, Genome Canada and Genome British Columbia), two organisations from Brazil (Oswaldo Cruz Foundation and the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development), the South African Medical Research Council and the Iran Ministry of Health and Medical Education are members/observers of the consortium. More organisations can join ICPeMed at any time.

2.2 Short description of ERA PerMed

The **European Research Area Network for Personalised Medicine**, [ERA PerMed](#), is a funding programme for collaborative and innovative research projects in the field of PM, co-funded by 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 four 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.

2.3 Short description of the ICPeMed Family

ICPeMed works not only in close collaboration with ERA PerMed but also several Coordination and Support Actions (CSAs) funded by the EC. This so called [ICPeMed 'Family'](#) 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 focusing 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 IC2PeMed, "Integrating China in the International Consortium for Personalised Medicine".

² Action Plan- *Actionable Research and Support Activities identified by the International Consortium for Personalised Medicine*:

https://www.icpermed.eu/media/content/ICPerMed_Actionplan_2017_web.pdf



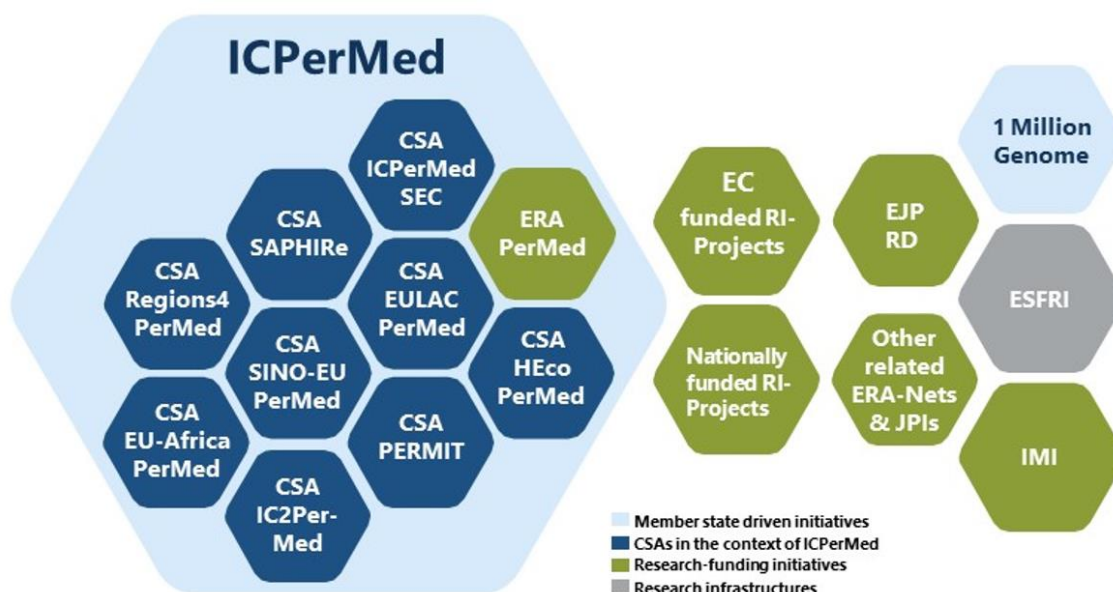


Figure 1. ICPerMed 'Family' - Related Initiatives and ERA-Nets.

2.4 Short description of Africa EU-Partnership

The [Africa-EU Partnership](#) was formally established in 2000 at the first Africa-EU Summit in Cairo. It is a multi-actor partnership guided by the EU and African Union (AU) Member States along with several non-state and civil society organisations, youth bodies, economic and social actors, and the private sector. Nowadays, it is guided by the Joint Africa-EU strategy, adopted in 2007.

This Partnership strives to bring Africa and Europe closer together by strengthening economic cooperation and promoting sustainable development, with both continents co-existing in peace, security, democracy, prosperity, solidarity, and human dignity. Against this backdrop, the two partners are determined to work together on a strategic, long-term footing to develop a shared vision for EU-Africa relations in a globalised world.

The Africa-EU Partnership shows the engagement in political and policy dialogues and the cooperative relationship between EU-Africa. To tackle the challenges of the times and set political priorities, the EU and African Union have been meeting over the years in different formats, such as EU-AU summits of heads of states, ministerial meetings, Commission-to-Commission meetings, and inter-parliamentary meetings.

Accordingly, [the High Level Policy Dialogue \(HLPD\)](#) on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) was adopted at the 2nd Africa-EU Summit in Tripoli in 2010 as an important element of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES). It is co-chaired by the European Union (EC, DG Research and Innovation) and the African Union (Member State holding the chair of the AU Specialised Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology) and brings together the Science and Technology (S&T) representatives from the 27 EU Member States and the 55 AU Member States.

It is important to mention the HLPD Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), which acts as a forum for the exchange of information, views and recommendation on R&I Policy in the AU and EU. This platform identifies development issues of regional importance to be addressed by R&I actions and proposes concrete actions to be taken into account in the context of the Africa-EU Partnership.

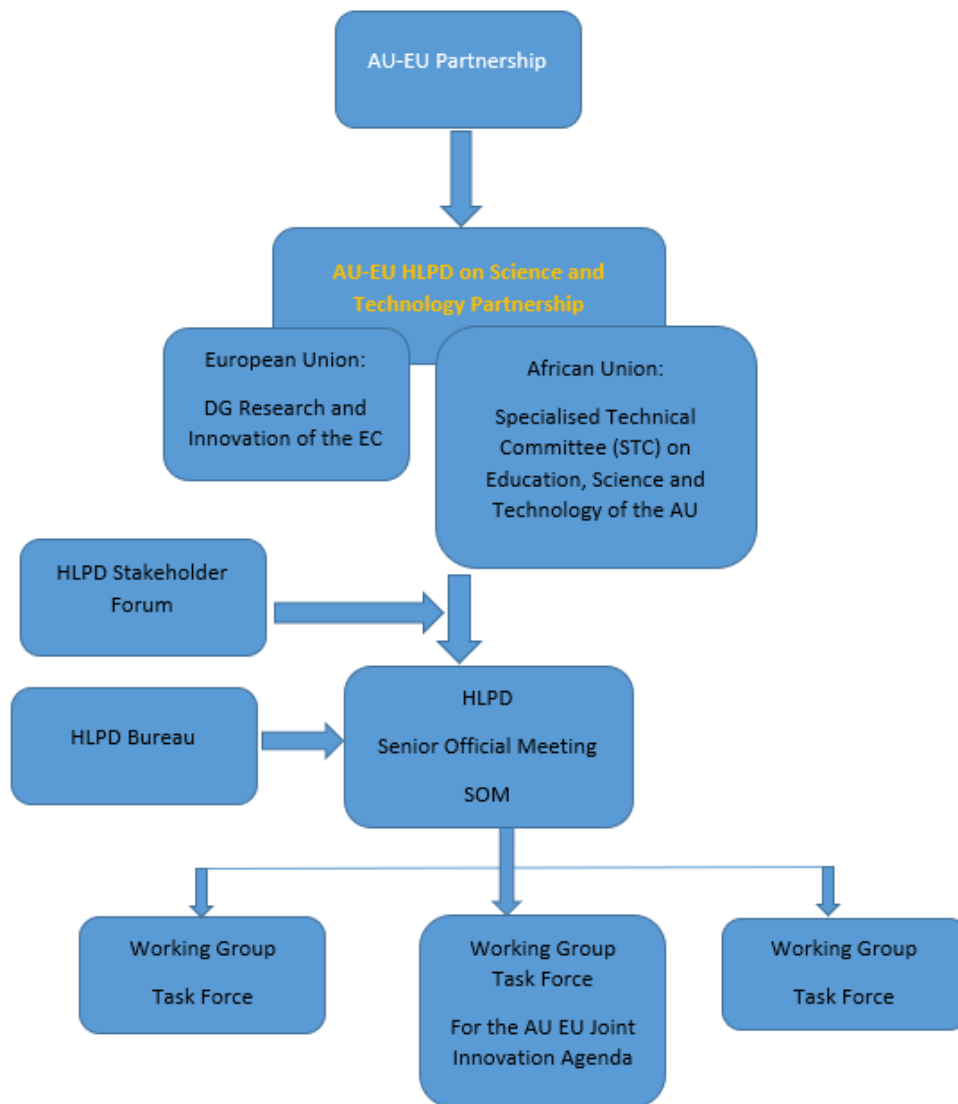


Figure 2. Organizational Framework of the AU-EU Partnership

Activities and results of interactions of EU-Africa PerMed with ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the Africa EU-Partnership

1. Under the frame of the Task 4.1 Integration of AU countries in the ICPeMed consortium and in ERA PerMed

1.1 Overview

Various actions took place since the beginning of the project (February 2021) until M27 (April 2023) in order to integrate the AU countries in activities of the ICPeMed consortium and in ERA PerMed. This includes informative sessions with the EU-Africa PerMed partners, participation of EU-Africa PerMed partners in ICPeMed events, i.e. ICPeMed Family meetings, workshops and conferences, and common dissemination and communication activities (and any other), as detailed below.

The EU AU PerMed D4.1 Action Plan for the involvement of African countries in ICPeMed and ERA PerMed submitted in February 2022, proposed to work at three different levels:

- I. Presenting ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPeMed family to the African communities.
- II. 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.
- III. Developing common dissemination and communication activities between EU-Africa PerMed, ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPeMed family.

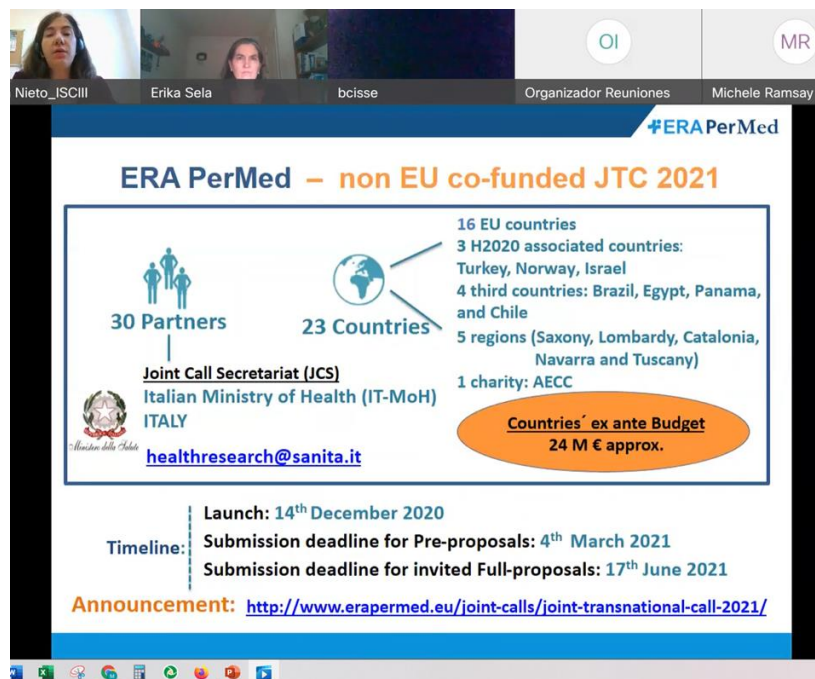
With ANR (France) being partner of ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the EU-Africa PerMed project as well as other activities related to PM in Europe, the EU-Africa PerMed consortium was updated regularly on activities related to those three projects ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPeMed Family as well as EP PerMed via mail and updates provided in EU-Africa PerMed internal consortium meetings.

1.2 Presenting ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPeMed family to the African communities

Informative sessions on ICPeMed and ERA PerMed have been organised (via webinar and face to face meetings) to inform African partners of the EU-Africa PerMed and other relevant African stakeholders about the main objectives, functioning and procedures to become members of these initiatives. EU-Africa PerMed representatives furthermore presented the project and ICPeMed in events organised by other initiatives, as detailed below.

- EU-Africa PerMed was presented together with ICPeMed by Monika Frenzel (ANR, France) during the AERAP organised "**Africa-Europe Science and Innovation Summit**" on 16th June 2021 during the session "Genomics for Shared Research and Better Health Outcomes" in a talk entitled: "*Collaboration in Personalised Medicine: ICPeMed and EU-Africa PerMed*".
- EU-Africa PerMed organised an **ERA PerMed Information Day** on 23rd September 2021. As a way for African project partners to better understand ERA PerMed and the opportunities it offers to African researchers, a one-hour webinar titled "*How to join transnational calls on Personalized Medicine*" was organized. Partners of the project were invited to assist and to invite other African funders. The total number of participants was 15, mainly of them consortium partners. EU-Africa PerMed coordinator, Erika Sela (Innovatec, Spain) and ERA PerMed coordinator, Cristina Nieto (ISCIII, Spain) made the following presentations,

respectively: “EU-Africa PerMed and importance about cross-border joint funding actions in PM” and “Presentation of the ERA PerMed funding program”. Lastly, there was a time for open discussions.



Picture 1. ERA PerMed Information Day on 23 September 2021.

An important outcome of this webinar was the interest shown by the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) to participate in the joint call, as it finally did with 5 participants.

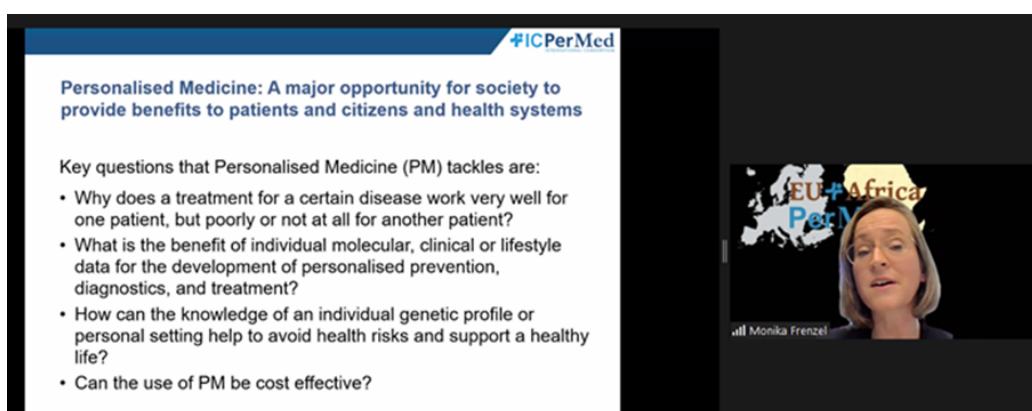
- ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPeMed family were presented in the **EU-Africa PerMed Information Days**, by ANR (Michael Joulie, France), being part of both, the ICPeMed Secretariat and the EU-Africa PerMed consortium. These Information Days were 1-hour webinars (one in [English](#) and one in [French](#)) set up to learn about the project: objectives, planned activities and expected results; and a special slot was to presenting ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and ICPeMed family. A total of 104 people registered for the English Info-day, and 57 for the French Info-day. Both webinars provided a first opportunity to present the project objectives and activities to African stakeholders, coming from research organizations, universities, Ministries, and funding agencies.





Picture 2. ANR Representative, Michael Joulie, presenting ICPerMed, ERA PerMed and ICPerMed family in the EU-Africa PerMed information day on 1st December 2021

- Information about ICPerMed was shared with African Stakeholders during the **1st and 2nd EU-Africa PerMed Stakeholder Workshop**, and also in the regional meetings, i.e., in the **1st Regional Stakeholder Workshop** in Nairobi, Kenya (13-14 July 2022) hosted by NACOSTI, for the East African countries, in **Southern Africa Regional Stakeholder Workshop** that took place in Cape Town, South Africa (5-6 December 2022) hosted and funded by SAMRC, for the Southern African countries, and in regional meetings in North and West/Central Africa in December and January 2023.
- The **1st Stakeholder Workshop** took place as an online event, on the 9th-10th of February 2022, hosted by the NACOSTI (the Kenya National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation). A total of 248 participants had registered by 8th of February 2022, and participants were drawn from 43 countries, with 88% coming from the 31 African countries represented. In this event, ANR representative, Monika Frenzel, presented these initiatives in a [presentation](#) entitled “A dedicated European multi-stakeholder framework for PM- The International Consortium for Personalised Medicine”.



Picture 3. ANR Representative, Monika Frenzel, presenting ICPerMed, ERA PerMed and ICPerMed family in the EU-Africa PerMed 1st Stakeholder Workshop



- The **2nd Stakeholder Workshop** was a hybrid event that took place on 20-21 February 2023 in Cape Town, South Africa hosted by SAMRC (South African Medical Research Council). In the second day, ANR representative, Monika Frenzel, presented these initiatives in a presentation entitled “*Opportunities for collaboration between Africa and Europe in Personalised Medicine – Presentation of collaboration examples: ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the European Partnership for Personalised Medicine*”.
- The ICPeMed and the EU-Africa PerMed were presented by Monika Frenzel (ANR, France) during the **2nd SAMRC Sub-Saharan Africa Funders Forum** on 20-21 November 2022 in Cape Town, South Africa, in the session 3: *Precision Medicine in Africa*. This session aimed at highlighting current activities and funding opportunities to develop the research and innovation capacity of pharmacogenomics, genomics/ proteomics, data science and implementation into health systems in Africa. The session was moderated by Rizwana Mia, SAMRC (South Africa).
- The different PM European initiatives related to ICPeMed and the EU-Africa PerMed project were presented at the **World Science Forum** on 6th of December 2022 in form of a selected side event with the title: EU-Africa PerMed Consortium: Building links between Europe and Africa in Personalised Medicine. The talk concerning the ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and ICPeMed family presentation was entitled: “*The vision from ICPeMed, the future outlook for international collaboration in PM*” and was presented by Monika Frenzel (ANR, France), while additional talks were given by Erika Sela (Innovatec, Spain), Rizwana Mia (SAMRC, South Africa), Paul Tanui (AUDA-NEPAD).

1.3 Participation or representation of EU-Africa PerMed in ICPeMed events

The EU-Africa PerMed project coordinator Joaquín Guinea (Innovatec, Spain), presented the project at its start in an invited talk to the [ICPeMed Executive Committee](#) on 23-24 February 2021. Thereafter, biannually during ICPeMed Executive Committee meetings, the ICPeMed consortium is updated by Monika Frenzel (ANR, France) in her roles as EU-Africa PerMed ambassador about past and ongoing activities of the EU-Africa PerMed project via short presentations.

The EU-Africa PerMed partner, Rizwana Mia (SAMRC, South Africa), participated as panellist in the session: *Enabling healthcare systems to implement the next generation of medicine: a crucial shift*, of the [2nd ICPeMed Conference “Personalised Medicine – From Vision to Practice”](#) that took place on 25-26 February 2021.

EU-Africa PerMed organised jointly together with the other international ICPeMed Family CSAs (EULAC-PerMed, Sino-EU PerMed and IC2PerMed) and the CSA “Beyond One Million Genomes” a dedicated session on international collaboration in the [ICPeMed Family Meeting](#) on 9-10 November 2021: “Internationalisation of ICPeMed activities – Facilitators and hurdles”. The discussion was supported by a talk from the project partner Rizwana Mia (SAMRC) of South-Africa. Several other representatives of EU-Africa PerMed partner organisations participated in this closed meeting.

Representatives of EU-Africa PerMed partners also participated on-site and virtual in the [ICPeMed Conference – Prelude to the Future of Medicine](#) that took place in Paris, on 5 and 6 October 2022³.

EU-Africa PerMed participated in the last **ICPeMed Workshop “Preparing the future for Personalised medicine: EP PerMed”**, that took place in Navarra, Spain, on 17 and 18 of January



2023. In this event, the EU-Africa PerMed project coordinator, Joaquin Guinea (Innovatec, Spain), presented the project in the Second Plenary session *Key Areas: International and Regional Perspectives of Personalised Medicine*⁴ that was moderated by Monika Frenzel (ANR, France), part of the ICPeMed consortium, the ICPeMed Secretariat and EP PerMed drafting group but also representative of the EU-Africa PerMed consortium and task lead of 4.1.

Furthermore, the EU-Africa PerMed coordinators Erika Sela and Joaquin Guinea (Innovatec, Spain) participate, together with Monika Frenzel (ANR, France) as ambassador, in the ICPeMed Family CSA coordinators meetings that are taking place at least one a year since 2021 and aimed to connect the different CSAs as well as ICPeMed and its Secretariat.

1.4 Common dissemination activities with ICPeMed and ERA PerMed

Common dissemination activities have been developed between EU-Africa PerMed, ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPeMed family, highlighting the following:

- EU-Africa PerMed is part of the **ICPeMed YouTube video** titled [“ICPeMed Family - The International Perspective”](#). In this video, the EU-Africa PerMed coordinator Joaquín Guinea (Innovatec, Spain), explains the benefits of incorporating African countries in reflections for the international PM strategic agenda.



Picture 4. Participation of EU-Africa PerMed in the ICPeMed family video.

- ICPeMed is represented and presented in the two **EU-Africa PerMed videos**: [“EU Africa PerMed Promoting Personalised Medicine Agenda and Africa EU Collaboration”](#) and [“EU Africa PerMed”](#). To increase the outreach, the latter video is available in two languages: [English](#) and [French](#).
- EU-Africa PerMed news are available in **ICPeMed newsletters**:
 - 18/03/2021: ICPeMed Newsletter March 2021: [“CSA EU-Africa PerMed: Building links between Europe and Africa in Personalised Medicine”](#).

⁴ Agenda of the ICPeMed Workshop “Preparing the future for Personalised Medicine: EP PerMed”: https://www.icpermed.eu/media/content/Agenda%20ICPerMed%20Workshop_January%202023.pdf
And workshop report: <https://www.icpermed.eu/en/ICPerMed-Workshop-2023-1048.php>

- 27/09/2021: ICPeMed Newsletter September 2021: “Presentation of ICPeMed and the ICPeMed Family through a series of videos”.
- 07/12/2021: ICPeMed Newsletter December 2021: “EU-Africa PerMed – Results of the scientific and policy mapping available”.
- 31/03/2022: ICPeMed Newsletter March 2022: “EU-Africa PerMed: Outcome of the 1st Stakeholder Workshop”.
- 21/07/2022: ICPeMed Newsletter July 2022: “EU-Africa PerMed – First webinar on oncology and publication of new project outcomes”.
- 09/12/2022: ICPeMed Newsletter November 2022: “EU-Africa PerMed – First regional workshop, E&T activities and SAMRC joins ICPeMed”.
- EU-Africa PerMed news are available on the **ICPeMed website** in the News section:
 - 04/03/2021: “Kickoff of the CSA EU-Africa PerMed: Building links between Europe and Africa in Personalised Medicine”.
 - 22/11/2021: “EU-Africa PerMed information day”.
 - 29/04/2022: “EU-Africa PerMed Webinar”
 - 01/07/2022: “East Africa regional stakeholder workshop on July 13-14, 2022”
 - 23/08/2022: “East Africa PM Regional Stakeholder workshop”
 - 23/09/2022: “CSA EU-Africa PerMed Webinar Series”
 - 04/10/2022: “South African Medical Research Council joins ICPeMed”
 - 02/11/2022: “Webinar: Implementing Personalised Medicine in Africa”
 - 19/12/2022: “1st EU-Africa PerMed Summer School”
 - 02/03/2023: “EU-Africa PerMed Stakeholder Workshop & Summer School”
 - -09/03/2023: “EU-Africa PerMed Webinar: Health Technology Assessment”.
- ICPeMed and ERA PerMed news available in **EU-Africa PerMed newsletters**:
 - 02/2022: EU-Africa PerMed 2nd Newsletter
 - Dr. Michael Joulie presentations about ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the ICPeMed family in the EU-Africa Information Days were highlighted in this newsletter; also, the informative session about ICPeMed in the 1st Stakeholder Workshop.
 - 11/2022: EU-Africa PerMed 3rd Newsletter
 - Section about ICPeMed in this newsletter, including the presentation of this initiative, past ICPeMed events (ICPeMed Conference in Paris on 5-6 October 2022 and the second ICPeMed training), and links of its website, Twitter official account and LinkedIn Page.
 - Section about ERA PerMed in this newsletter, including information about the JTC2022 transnational call and the inclusion of SAMRC in this mentioned call.
- EU-Africa PerMed news in **ERA PerMed newsletters and website**:
 - 05/07/2021: “ICPeMed and ICPeMed family videos”.



- 27/07/2021: “ERA PerMed: News, Updates, Achievements and Future Plans”
 - EU-Africa PerMed project was shortly presented in the ERA PerMed 6th Newsletter July 2021
- 23/11/2021: “EU-AFRICA PerMed – ONLINE INFORMATION DAYS”.
- 19/04/2022 and 03/05/2022: “1st First EU Africa PerMed Webinar: “Oncology: Personalised Medicine approach”
- 28/07/2022: “ERA PerMed: News, Updates, Achievements and Future Plans”
 - SAMRC (South Africa) is welcome as a new funding agency that joined ERA PerMed’s JTC2022, in the ERA PerMed 8th Newsletter.
- 19/01/2023: “ERA PerMed Results of the Joint transnational call 2022”.
 - 1st EU-Africa PerMed Summer School is shortly announced in the ERA PerMed
- Information about ICPeMed in the **EU-Africa PerMed website**, in the section “Project Background”.
- Constant news sharing between EU-Africa PerMed, ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and other ICPeMed family projects in social media, both in **Twitter** official accounts and **LinkedIn** pages.

1.5 Participation of EU-Africa PerMed in the preparations of the European Partnership for Personalised Medicine

Several EU-Africa PerMed partner organisations participated in the open consultation connected to the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) for PM of the upcoming European Partnership for Personalised Medicine (EP PerMed) to provide particularly their inputs regarding the international aspects of PM.

The EU-Africa PerMed coordinators Erika Sela and Joaquin Guinea (Innovatec, Spain) participated actively in the preparation of the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) for PM of the upcoming European Partnership for Personalised Medicine (EP PerMed). They have been interviewed in summer 2022 to provide particularly their input regarding the international aspects of PM. A dedicated section on the “International perspective of PM” is part of the SRIA for PM. Several EU-Africa PerMed partner organisations participated in the open consultation connected to the SRIA for PM in November-December 2022. It is relevant to mention too the participation of South Africa in the ICPeMed Open Consultation, being the only African country to participate on it.

1.6 Integration of AU countries in the ICPeMed consortium

1.6.1 Inclusion of SAMRC into the ICPeMed

A major outcome of the EU-Africa PerMed project at this level has been the inclusion of one of our African partners, the **South African Medical Research Council SAMRC**, into the International Consortium for Personalised Medicine (ICPeMed) in October 2022. With its entry into this International Consortium, SAMRC became the first African organization to do so, which is one of the goals of the EU-Africa PerMed program.



1.6.2 Further exchanges regarding the inclusion of African organisations in ICPPerMed

During EU-Africa PerMed events, the projects actively reached out to funding organisations and ministries in Africa to promote ICPPerMed and invite eligible organisations to join the ICPPerMed. Different exchanges took place and are still running with organisations from the following countries: Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tunisia. This WP is constantly working on raising interest and identifying potential partners for the ICPPerMed.

1.7. Integration of AU countries in ERA PerMed

1.7.1 Participation of SAMRC in the JTC2022 of ERA PerMed

As mentioned before, after the ERA PerMed Information Day that took place on 23rd September 2021 for EU-Africa PerMed project partners, SAMRC shown interest in the Joint Transnational Call (JTC) 2022, which was focused on “Prevention in Personalised Medicine”. As a result, SAMRC participated in this JTC with 5 participants: 3 as coordinators and 2 as partners. The total requested funds by SAMRC were 2.286.106 €, while the initial commitments were 690.000 €.

1.7.2. Optima project funded by JTC2022 of ERA PerMed

One of the participants in the ERA PerMed JTC 2022 got the funding for the project, with SAMRC as a coordinator. The project funded was OPTIMA- Ommics Approach for Personalised Prevention of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus for African and European Populations, which is coordinated by Julia H. Goedecke, from SAMRC and the University of the Witwatersrand, with partners from Germany and Sweden. This is a tangible result from our project work, as the SAMRC joined the ERA PerMed in 2022, after joining the EU-Africa PerMed project.

NEWSLETTER 9



Julia H. Goedecke

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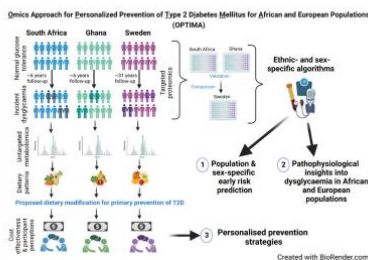
Tommy Olsson, Dept. of Public Health and Clinical Medicine, Umeå University, Sweden

Rikard Landberg, Division of Food Science and Nutrition, Dept. of Biology and Biological Engineering, Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden

OPTIMA

Ommics Approach for Personalised Prevention of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus for African and European Populations

The global prevalence of type 2 diabetes (T2D) is increasing, with sub-Saharan Africa most affected. Although the development of T2D differs between African and European populations, and between men and women, risk screening and guidelines for the prevention of T2D are generic. This collaboration between Sweden, Germany and South Africa enables the measurement of circulating proteins and metabolites to identify sex- and ethnic-specific biomarkers for the early prediction of T2D risk in two African cohorts (South African and Ghana) and a European (Swedish) cohort. We will also link these biomarkers to dietary patterns, which will be used to inform targeted dietary modifications for primary prevention of T2D in the different populations. The cost effectiveness of the targeted dietary modifications, as well as the perceptions among target populations regarding these early preventative strategies will be assessed in the respective countries to inform future implementation of personalised prevention strategies.



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Picture 5. News about SAMRC funded project in ERA PerMed JTC 2022 (OPTIMA) in the 9th ERA PerMed Newsletter.



2. Under the Frame of the Task 4.3: Contribution to the EU-AU Policy Dialogue and support to the Africa-EU Partnership

As has been said before, the High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) was adopted at the 2nd Africa-EU Summit in Tripoli in 2010 as an important element of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) (*Figure 2*).

The HLPD is co-chaired by the European Commission Directorate General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD) and by the African Union member state holding chair of the Specialised Technical Committee (STC) on Education, Science and Technology of the African Union. The AU-EU HLPD on STI brings together the Science and Technology (S&T) representatives from the 27 EU Member States and the 55 AU Member States.

AUDA-NEPAD, member of the EU-Africa PerMed consortium, occupies a strategically important position in the organizational framework (*Figure 2*) around the so-called HLPD that allows AU-EU active collaboration.

AUDA-NEPAD is member of the EU-AU HLPD on STI Bureau. The HLPD Bureau supports the HLPD SOM. It is made up of representatives from several AU and EU countries and provides logistic and technical support to the SOM, chaired by the SOM chair.

Furthermore, AUDA-NEPAD is often invited to participate in the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Education, Science, Technology and Innovation.

AUDA-NEPAD reached out to the AU Specialised Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology on January 2022 in order to explore the potential contribution that the EU-Africa PerMed project could bring to the AU-EU HLPD's work in relation to personalised medicine. It was agreed that EU-Africa PerMed project should provide inputs to the ongoing draft AU-EU Innovation Agenda⁵ that it is currently the only focus of the AU-EU HLPD for 2023. In line with this, AUDA-NEPAD participated as a member of the Taskforce in the Ad-hoc Innovation Agenda Working Group Meetings, where information about the EU-Africa PerMed project was shared.

In the seventh Senior Official Meeting of the AU-EU High Level Policy Dialogue for Science, Technology and Innovation on January 2022, participants jointly acknowledged the development of an EU-AU Innovation Agenda strategically designed to support sustainable growth and jobs, in particular for the youth. This meeting results were shared with the EU-Africa PerMed consortium members (mainly AUDA NEPAD), which allowed promotion and further inclusion of the precision medicine as a long-term objective for Public Health in the current AU-EU Innovation Agenda working document, as quoted below:

“Public Health – 1 of 1: “Designing and implementing new and innovative methods and tools to counteract future health threats due to long standing, (re)emerging, or antimicrobial resistant pathogens, and to promote one health and precision medicine, in a changing environment”.

It is also worth to mention that members of EU-Africa PerMed (from ISCIII, Innovatec and ANR), had a telco on the 21st February 2022 with Ms. Armela Dino, Science Policy Analyst from the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation and Spanish representative in the EU-AU HLPD Bureau. She explained how the EU-AU HLPD STI dialogue works, the different governance levels and priorities, and the new AU-EU Innovation Agenda. Because of this meeting, the EU-Africa PerMed project participated in the AU-EU Innovation Agenda public consultation, launched by

⁵ The joint AU-EU Innovation Agenda is an unprecedented initiative aiming to accelerate the translation of Research and Innovation into tangible positive impact on the ground, so to generate products, services, businesses and jobs, in Africa and Europe.



the EC to gather feedback and input from citizens and organisations on the working document of AU-EU Innovation Agenda.

In addition, arrangements were made for the project to participate in various relevant forums such as the AU-EU Innovation Agenda Hybrid Side Event held in New York on 21 September 2022⁶ and the AU-EU Innovation Agenda Stakeholder Event, that took place in Nairobi (Kenya) on the 23-24 November 2022. In this last event, members of the EU-Africa PerMed project participated, including Teresia Nyawira from NACOSTI, who also joined as a rapporteur of the Thematic Workshop on Public Health and highlighted the importance and potential of PM.



Picture 6. Teresia Nyawira from NACOSTI and member of EU-Africa PerMed project, during the AU-EU Innovation Agenda stakeholder event held in Nairobi (Kenya), Nov 2022.

For the upcoming months, new activities are planned in order to increase our visibility and influence on the work done by the AU EU Policy Dialogue on STI, especially in the area of Health. We will report about them on the next WP4 deliverable *D.4.3 Final Report on interactions of EU-Africa PerMed, ICPeMed, ERA PerMed and the Africa-EU Partnership*, to be submitted in month 47 (December 2024).

⁶ This event was organised by the EC in close collaboration with the African Union Commission and AUDA-NEPAD. https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/au-eu-innovation-agenda-unga77-science-summit-2022-09-16_en