

Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of the SAPHIRE newsletter.

In this issue, we will introduce you to the SAPHIRE project and our team. We will highlight our work to date, and will also keep you up to date with any important upcoming events.

We hope you enjoy this issue and if you have any suggestions for future issues please let us know!

Best wishes
SAPHIRE Team

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The SAPHIRE project

Securing Adoption of Personalised Health in Regions

The Consortium for Securing the Adoption of Personalised Health in Regions (SAPHIRE), aims to structure the application of personalised health at regional level which will drive the transition towards sustainable healthcare and personalised health.

To stimulate developments in personalised medicine and support the uptake in all European regions, including sparsely populated and remote regions, the EU Commission awarded a coordination and support action on Securing the Adoption of Personalised Health in Regions - SAPHIRE.

The project will support the agenda of the International Consortium of Personalised Medicine (ICPerMed), which was formally established in November 2016 at the initiative of the European Commission.

SAPHIRE is coordinated by the Department Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI) of the Flemish government . Other consortium members include the Public Health Agency (PHA) from Northern Ireland, Hungary-based EIT Health InnoStars and the EuroBioForum Foundation (The Netherlands).

SAPHIRE will run for the next three years and plans to engage with regional stakeholders, including policymakers, industrial and academic actors via a series of thematic workshops.

Meet the team



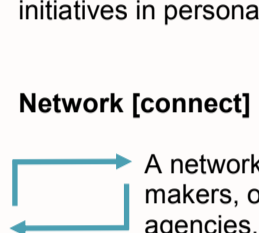
Okker D. van Batenburg, Operations Manager, EuroBioForum Foundation, The Netherlands



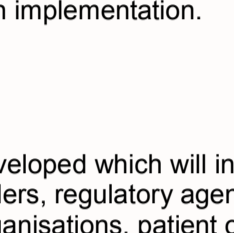
Wouter Spek, Director, EuroBioForum Foundation, The Netherlands



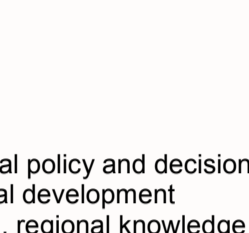
Kathleen D'Hondt, Policy Advisor and SAPHIRE co-ordinator, Flemish government - Department of Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI), Belgium



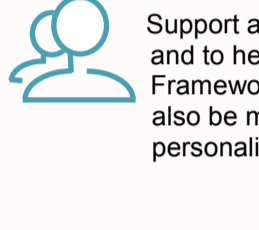
Janice Bailie, Assistant Director of Research and Development Division, Public Health Agency, Northern Ireland



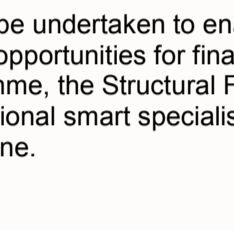
Seppe Kelchtermans, Policy Advisor, Flemish government - Department of Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI), Belgium



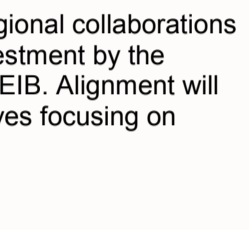
Jolien Roovers, Policy Advisor, Flemish government - Department of Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI), Belgium



Sorcha Finnegan, Programme Manager, Research and Development Division, Public Health Agency, Northern Ireland



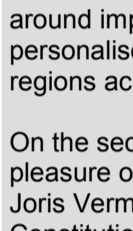
Daniela Dias-Santos, Innovation Project Analyst, EIT Health InnoStars



Cynthia de Ghellinck, Policy Advisor, Flemish government - Department of Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI), Belgium

What is our plan?

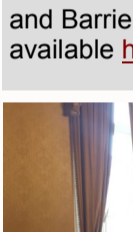
Observe [scout]



A thorough mapping exercise will address specific regional needs, while taking the different levels of personalised medicine maturity into account. Attention will focus on linking remote and sparsely populated regions to regions that are more advanced in personalised health.

A toolbox for services and support will be developed to help regions with joint initiatives in personalised health implementation.

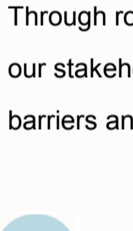
Network [connect]



A network will be developed which will include regional policy and decision makers, opinion leaders, regulatory agencies, regional development agencies, cluster organisations, patient organisations, regional knowledge institutions and healthcare providers.

The network will bring regional strengths, needs and barriers to the attention of national and European policy makers. This will enable a collaborative approach to developing personalised medicine in regions.

Support [activate]



Support actions will be undertaken to enable inter-regional collaborations and to help identify opportunities for financing or investment by the Framework Programme, the Structural Funds or the EIB. Alignment will also be made to regional smart specialisation initiatives focusing on personalised medicine.

First SAPHIRE workshop held in Brussels, March 2019

The workshop entitled "Region specific needs and barriers" was attended by eighteen different regions, and, attracted stakeholders from academia, industry, government and healthcare.

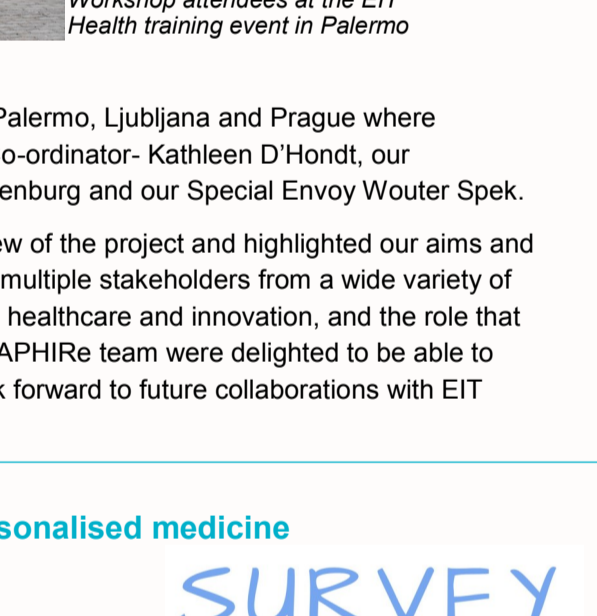
Kathleen D'Hondt, Policy Advisor for EWI and SAPHIRE co-ordinator opened the event by giving an overview of SAPHIRE (presentation available [here](#)).

There were a number of interactive round table discussions in which attendees were invited to talk about the barriers and needs around implementation of personalised medicine in different regions across Europe.

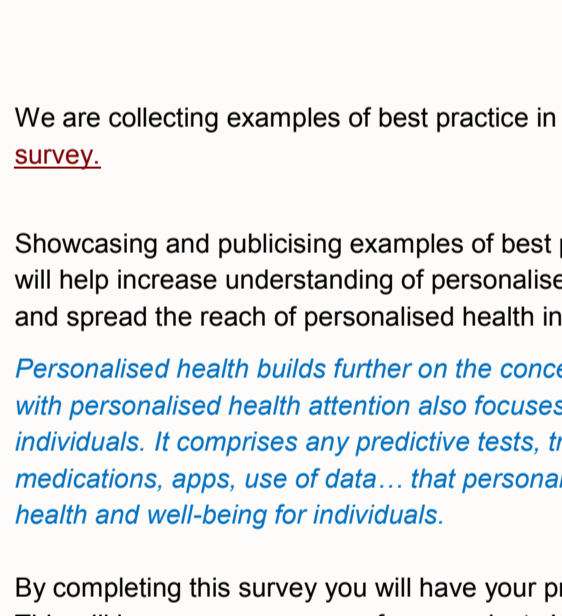
On the second day we had the pleasure of welcoming Professor Joris Vermeesch, Head of the Constitutional Cytogenetics Unit of the Center for Human Genetics, Leuven, Belgium, Professor of Molecular Cytogenetics and Genome Research and co-ordinator of the genomics core at the university hospital. Professor Vermeesch gave a presentation on "Personalised Medicine: Needs and Barriers" (presentation available [here](#)).



SAPHIRE workshop participants: Eighteen regions from across Europe were represented at the first SAPHIRE workshop.



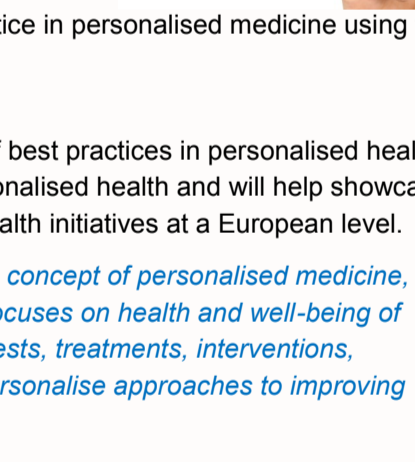
Kathleen D'Hondt, Policy Advisor, Dep. Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI), Flemish government and SAPHIRE co-ordinator gives an overview of SAPHIRE



Professor Joris Vermeesch gives a presentation on barriers and needs in precision medicine

Regional barriers and needs

Through round table discussions with our stakeholders, some of the regional barriers and needs identified included:

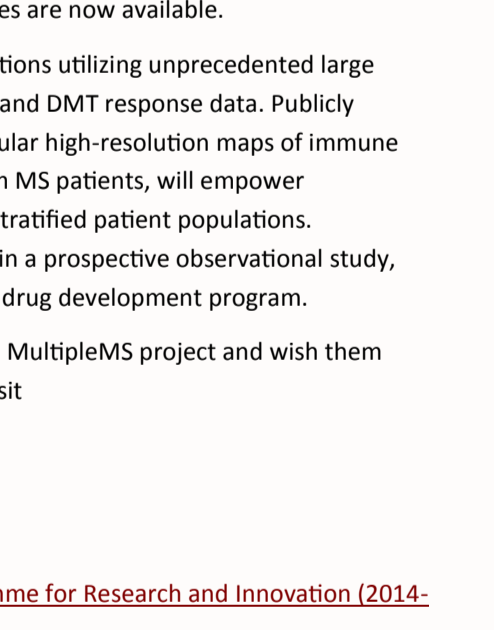


- Data privacy
- Medical curricula
- Funding
- Communication
- Educating the public
- Infrastructure
- Legislation
- Translating basic science
- Collaboration

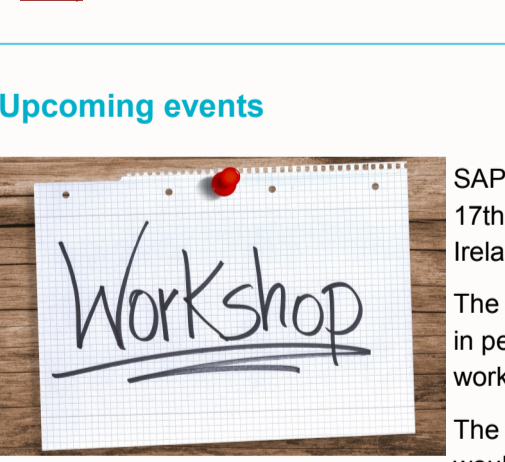
SAPHIRE representatives attend EIT Health RIS Regions Innovation training programme

SAPHIRE recently took part in EIT Health Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) training in innovation sessions. These training sessions were designed to provide EIT RIS regions with appropriate tools and skills to participate in EIT Health RIS 2019 innovation call, which aims at funding high-quality, strong and balanced projects, targeting EIT Health six main focus areas in healthcare.

EIT Health InnoStars works with multiple stakeholders from across Europe in order to strengthen healthcare systems, promote better health of citizens, and, contribute to a sustainable health economy in Europe.



Wouter Spek, Special Envoy for personalised medicine landscape and SAPHIRE's role in implementation and adoption of personalised medicine.



Workshop attendees at the EIT Health training event in Palermo

RIS training sessions took place in Palermo, Ljubljana and Prague where SAPHIRE was represented by our Co-ordinator- Kathleen D'Hondt, our Operations Manager Okker Van Batenburg and our Special Envoy Wouter Spek.

Our SAPHIRE team gave an overview of the project and highlighted our aims and objectives. It was an opportunity for multiple stakeholders from a wide variety of backgrounds to interact and discuss healthcare and innovation, and the role that personalised medicine plays. The SAPHIRE team were delighted to be able to participate at this event, and we look forward to future collaborations with EIT

Survey- Best practice in personalised medicine



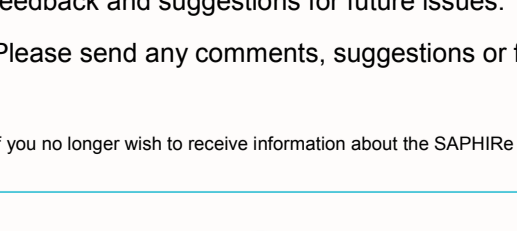
We are collecting examples of best practice in personalised medicine using this [survey](#).

Showcasing and publicising examples of best practices in personalised health will help increase understanding of personalised health and will help showcase and spread the reach of personalised health initiatives at a European level.

Personalised health further on the concept of personalised medicine, but with personalised health attention also focuses on health and well-being of individuals. It comprises any predictive tests, treatments, interventions, medications, apps, use of data... that personalise approaches to improving health and well-being for individuals.

By completing this survey you will have your project visible at a European level. This will increase awareness of your project. We will also feature one example in every issue of our newsletter, with links to your project and/or institution's website. If you would like to complete this short survey please click [here](#)

In the spotlight - The MultipleMS Project



In this issue we present the **MultipleMS project**.

Full project title: Multiple manifestations of genetic and non-genetic factors in Multiple Sclerosis disentangled with a multi-omics approach to accelerate personalised medicine <https://www.multiplems.eu/>

The MultipleMS project involves the united efforts of the consortium and companies across 11 European countries and the US to tailor the development and application of therapies to the individual MS patient.

To develop novel personalised medicine approaches for MS patients, the consortium will identify a combination of evidence-based selection of clinical, biological, and lifestyle features that can predict the clinical course, stratify patients based on their risk, and the therapeutic response to the existing drugs in a real-world setting. It also aims to gain in-depth knowledge of distinct pathogenic pathways to allow identification of targets for novel treatments. Their goal is timely, not only because there is an urgent need for precision management of MS but also because necessary knowledge, methodologies and vast multi-layer data resources are now available.

MultipleMS will identify stratified patient populations utilizing unprecedented large cohorts rich in genetic, lifestyle, clinical, imaging and DMT response data. Publicly available large scale 'multi-omics' data, in particular high-resolution maps of immune cells, in combination with 'multi-omics' data from MS patients, will empower identification of biological pathways underlying stratified patient populations.

MultipleMS will further validate these pathways in a prospective observational study, prioritize novel therapeutic targets and initiate a drug development program.

We look forward to following the progress of the MultipleMS project and wish them every success. To read more about the project visit <https://www.multiplems.eu/Newsletters/>

Project website: <https://www.multiplems.eu/>

Lead partner website: <https://ki.se/start>

Funder: EU - [Horizon 2020 – Framework Programme for Research and Innovation \(2014-2020\)](#)



SAPHIRE will host its next workshop on the 17th & 18th October in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

The title of the workshop is "Best practice in personalised health: An interactive workshop".

The workshop is by invitation only. If you would like to attend, or have any questions please contact info@saphire-eu.eu

Other news



SAPHIRE launched its new website in April.

You can keep up to date with all SAPHIRE-related news and activities by visiting our [website](#).

You can also sign up to receive information from us, such as newsletters and notifications of upcoming events. If you would like to subscribe to our mailing list please click [here](#)

Flanders pushing for a personalised tomorrow

Investing in industry-driven research projects in the field of personalised medicine

The Flemish Government has foreseen an additional €5 million annually in the coming 2 years to aide with the transformation from one size fits all medical model to a patient focused personalised medicine approach.

[Flanders.bio](#), an independent life sciences cluster organisation, will oversee the formation of an overarching cluster for personalised medicine with [Flanders.Health](#) serving as a starting point.

The cluster on personalised medicine will facilitate innovation in three ways:

- Ensuring a robust evidence based foundation is present in the fields of data, biomarkers, and their subsequent analysis.
- Facilitating the broad implementation of personalised medicine innovations with the help of innovative clinical trials and the development of new personalised technologies.
- Development of both an ethical and legal framework.

[Flanders.Health](#) will develop this overarching cluster over the coming year while simultaneously mapping out the current ecosystem and value chain of personalised medicine in Flanders.

These goals will be achieved in the form of ICON (interdisciplinary cooperative research) project funding. Multidisciplinary research teams consisting of scientists, industry stakeholders, and social economy partners will work on industry driven, generic projects to enhance personalised diagnostic and treatment modalities. Priority will be given to projects with a high medical urgency and/or high economical and societal impact, as to maximise the effects on the health care system

Regional funding programs for personalised medicine:

To serve as a best practice overview we would like to collect information on similar funding programs for personalised medicine in different European regions. This would provide an overview of the available funding and facilitate partnerships. If you have knowledge of similar funding schemes in your own European region don't hesitate to [contact us](#).

We hope you found this newsletter informative and helpful and would welcome your feedback and suggestions for future issues.

Please send any comments, suggestions or feedback to info@saphire-eu.eu

If you no longer wish to receive information about the SAPHIRE project, please let us know [here](#)

Contact Us

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[@projectSAPHIRE](https://twitter.com/projectSAPHIRE)

