



# CALL TEXT AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Call: Section 1 – Agro-food Value-chain 2021


Topic 1.3.1-2021 (IA) Increase adherence to the Mediterranean diet as a sustainable pattern including environmental, social and health aspects.

Version 1.0  
17 February 2021



The PRIMA programme is supported and funded under Horizon 2020, the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation

*Topic 1.3.1-2021 (IA) Increase adherence to the Mediterranean diet as a sustainable pattern including environmental, social and health aspects.*

	<p><i>SRIA priorities addressed</i></p> <p>3.1 Valorising food products from the traditional Mediterranean diet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- to improve raw material and ingredients composition, better exploiting resilient biodiversity and valorising genotypes and phenotypes richer in health-promoting bioactive compounds, with better use of sustainable production systems and soft processing technologies preserving the content of essential food components.</li></ul> <p>3.4 Implications of dietary shifts and sustainable diets for the Med populations and food industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- to respond to lifestyle changes have led to dietary changes and consumption of lower quality food, deficient in essential nutrients, micronutrients and health-promoting bioactive ingredients.</li><li>- to understand the complex relationship between lifestyle and health in the Mediterranean context, as well as the diet and physical activity habits, their heterogeneity and their determinants, and the vulnerability of the population.</li></ul>
	<p><b><u>OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 6/ NUTRITION AND HEALTH</li></ul>

### Challenge

The Mediterranean diet, being recognised by the UNESCO as "the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" is not only an integral part of the tradition and culture shared by many Mediterranean countries but it is also one of the most sustainable and healthy dietary patterns <sup>1</sup>.

It also presents significant opportunities to preserve biodiversity (local products) and improving health outcomes.<sup>2</sup> The importance of healthy dietary patterns has been particularly evident during the recent COVID-19 outbreak to boost the immune system, decreasing the susceptibility to infections.<sup>3</sup>

Adherence to the Mediterranean dietary pattern also has significant economic implications; among others, the reduction of national health expenditure, saving for consumers, and the valorisation of local companies and producers.

However, current data show a decline in adherence to the Mediterranean dietary pattern in northern as well as southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. If present trends persist, it is expected to have a growing incidence of non-communicable diseases (growing prevalence of overweight and obesity) and massive consequences on the quality of life and public health expenditure (WHO, 2015) social and economic impacts in the Mediterranean Region.

Drivers of consumption patterns and lifestyles are economic, technological, cultural, social and political. Shaping consumer food choices towards more sustainable healthy diets requires a

---

<sup>1</sup> Sustainable, Healthy diets are dietary pattern that promote all dimensions of individuals' health and wellbeing; have low environmental pressure and impact; are accessible, affordable, safe and equitable; and are culturally acceptable (FAO, 2019). Dietary patterns can be defined as "the quantities, proportions, variety, or combination of different foods, drinks, and nutrients (when available) in diets, and the frequency with which they are habitually consumed" USDA. 2015. A Series of Systematic Reviews on the Relationship Between Dietary Patterns and Health Outcomes. [online] Arlington, VA. [cited 3 October 2019]

<sup>2</sup> IPCC 2019 Special Report on Climate Change and Land <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/>

<sup>3</sup> Optimal Nutritional Status for a Well-Functioning Immune System Is an Important Factor to Protect against Viral Infections. Philip C. Calder et al. *Nutrients* 2020, 12, 1181; doi:10.3390/nu12041181

coherent policy package that will take behaviours, economics and food environment issues into account.

### Scope

The present topic is in continuity with the one proposed in 2020 Calls. While the previous one<sup>4</sup>, focused on the health aspects of the Mediterranean diet, based on its composition and effects on consumers., this one aims to enhance the adherence to the Mediterranean dietary pattern.

It focuses on increasing awareness and promotion of this healthy diet and sustainable lifestyle model across the Mediterranean region and in other parts of the world. Activities responding to this topic should analyse existing food systems to identify potential changes needed to encourage the consumption of diverse required foods and the eating behaviours consistent with the Mediterranean diet. Proposals should codify and valorise the components of the Mediterranean dietary patterns with the final goal to trigger mechanisms to attract more consumers and ensure greater recognition and competitiveness in markets of healthy Mediterranean food. This should be applied to a great variety of unprocessed or minimally processed foods present in the markets (domestic, regional, international), which are consistent with the Mediterranean dietary pattern, to counteract the mass consumption of unhealthy food. Proposals should propose new food products and related sustainable food habits, consistent with the Mediterranean diet, that meet consumers' preferences and acceptability along with tailored business models and marketing strategies. Activities could also propose a new process able to trigger the consumption of components of the Mediterranean diet or a mix between product and process.

Food behaviour drivers should be assessed to foster increasing adherence to the Mediterranean diet, to define how to influence food demand, by raising citizens' knowledge and awareness; as well as creating enabling environments for healthy and sustainable Mediterranean food choices. In this sense, activities should consider behaviour change initiatives to promote a healthy diet in Mediterranean countries among others, policy advice, communication strategies and awareness and education campaigns targeting in particular children, adolescents, and older adults, also by using attractive and tech-based aged adapted methodologies (e.g. game approaches). Scaling up of best practices already existing in the region, with continuous monitoring of their effectiveness, is encouraged.

Finally, proposals must monitor and report of the adherence to the Mediterranean Diet through the development of methodologies able to acquire data and objective indicators, distinguishing the quality of food intakes.

### Expected Impacts

- Identification of socio-economic and cultural barriers (including the food behaviour change) aiming to increase adherence to the Mediterranean diet, through hands-on approaches and experiments.
- Identification and comparative analysis of local determinants of food choices (such as education, socio-economic, hedonistic, market dynamics) of different Mediterranean populations through harmonised and validated methods.
- Foster new business models and marketing of new food products and promoting eating habits consistent with the Mediterranean diet, that meet consumers' preferences and acceptability.

---

<sup>4</sup> PRIMA AWP 2020 Topic 1.3.1-2020 (IA) Valorising the health benefits of the Traditional Mediterranean food products

- Assessment, monitoring and reporting of the adherence to the Mediterranean Diet through the development of methodologies that enable the acquisition of data and appropriate indicators.
- A shift towards consumer-driven new product development that corresponds to the appreciations, preferences, (health) needs and affordability means of consumers in the Mediterranean countries and tourists as ambassadors of the Mediterranean Diet.
- Improved nutrition and health thanks to a better diet.
- Consumers' empowerment (food information /awareness/ behavioural change).

### Key Performance indicators

- Number and diversity of actively engaged stakeholders (e.g. municipalities, food service, citizens, etc.) for promoting the healthy and sustainable Mediterranean dietary pattern.
- Extent to which (i) global citizenship education/awareness and (ii) education/awareness for sustainable development (including climate change education and healthy diet) are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) public awareness (adapted from SDG 12.8, indicator 12.8.1).
- Number of new health-related high-quality food.
- Number of socio-cultural actions and strategies promoting the healthy Mediterranean food choices through appropriate information provision to consumers and policymakers.
- Consumers' empowerment (food information /awareness/ behavioural change).

### Links with EU Policies

The proposal should indicate linkages to relevant EU policies and objectives in the context of the EU Green Deal and relevant Horizon Europe Missions and Partnerships<sup>5</sup>

- Farm to Fork Strategy<sup>6</sup>
- Biodiversity Strategy<sup>7</sup>
- Horizon Europe Mission on Soil Health and Food<sup>8</sup>
- European Partnership Water Security for the Planet (Water4All)
- European Partnership accelerating farming systems transition: agroecology living labs and research infrastructures
- European Partnership Agriculture of data
- European Partnership for Safe and Sustainable Food Systems
- European Partnership for rescuing biodiversity to safeguard life on Earth

---

<sup>5</sup> Horizon Europe Partnerships: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe/european-partnerships-horizon-europe/candidates-food-security\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe/european-partnerships-horizon-europe/candidates-food-security_en)

<sup>6</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system" [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:ea0f9f73-9ab2-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:ea0f9f73-9ab2-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

<sup>7</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 Bringing nature back into our lives" [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:a3c806a6-9ab3-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:a3c806a6-9ab3-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

<sup>8</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe/missions-horizon-europe/soil-health-and-food\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe/missions-horizon-europe/soil-health-and-food_en)

### Links with SDGs

- SDG Target: By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons.
- SDG Indicator 2.2.1: Prevalence of stunting (height for age  $<-2$  standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age.
- SDG Indicator 2.2.2: Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height  $>+2$  or  $<-2$  standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight).

*Table 3. Supporting information for Section 1 Call for Proposals, Topic 1.3.1*

Type of action	Innovation Action (IA)
Total indicative amount allocated to this call	<b>EUR 8.4 million</b>
Funding level	According to Horizon 2020 Rules 70% (except for non-profit legal entities, where a rate of 100% applies)
Technology Readiness levels (TRL)	TRL 6-7 Proposals should clearly state the starting and end TRLs of the key technology or technologies targeted in the project.
Budget and duration of grants	PRIMA considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU in the range of <b>EUR 2.8 million</b> and with a duration of <b>36 months</b> would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts or duration.
Eligibility conditions for participation	Please refer to section 5.1.1 of the PRIMA Annual Work Plan 2021 The standard admissibility (section 5.1.2) and eligibility conditions (section 5.1.3) apply.
Submission and evaluation procedure	The call will be organised according to a two-stage submission process. For the first step, a first-stage proposal ( <b>maximum ten pages</b> ) must be submitted within the first-stage submission deadline. Successful applicants in the first step will be invited to the second step to submit a full proposal ( <b>maximum 50 pages</b> ). A timeline for the submission and evaluation of applications can be found in Table 5 of the PRIMA Annual Work Plan 2021.
Evaluation rules	The award criteria, scoring, thresholds and weightings for IAs, listed in part 5.1.7 of the PRIMA Annual Work Plan 2021 will be used.
Grant agreement	PRIMA MGA (multi-beneficiary), based on Horizon 2020 MGA.
Consortium agreement	Participants in projects resulting from this Call for Proposals will be required to conclude a consortium agreement before the conclusion of the PRIMA grant agreement.