



CALL TEXT AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Call: Section 1 – Farming Systems 2021


Topic 1.2.1-2021 (IA) Increasing the environmental and socio-economic performance of small scale farming systems through improvements in organisational aspects and new value chain governance models.

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Topic 1.2.1-2021 (IA) Increasing the environmental and socio-economic performance of small scale farming systems through improvements in organisational aspects and new value chain governance models.

	<p><i>SRIA priorities addressed</i></p> <p>2.2 Developing sustainable and productive agro-ecosystems This priority tackles the challenge of food scarcity to face ever-growing food demand. The solution of the intensification of farming practices has often led to pollution, overexploitation of natural resources. A possible solution is the development of sustainable and productive agro-ecosystems.</p> <p>2.4 Developing farming systems able to generate income, to create employment and to contribute to a balanced territorial development</p> <p>- <u>OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 4/ SMART AND SUSTAINABLE FARMING
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Challenge

Small scale farming systems are the backbone of the Mediterranean farming system with an overwhelming contribution to the global food supply. However, many of the rural economies and smallholder farmers communities are struggling to sustain production, as low incomes, unsustainable and inefficient practices, lack of market connections and limited access to information are affecting their livelihood.

Fragmentation of the markets, inefficient farming practices, older age group of farmers, the disconnection between youth and their interest in agriculture are enhancing land abandonment and degradation, output quality and productivity, transparent and efficient access to markets (especially new markets based on e-commerce) and lack of valorisation of waste generated at farming level. Many organisational aspects made to support farmers, that was brought in the 20th Century, did not evolve to meet the current market demands, including the current models of cooperatives and associations that need uplifting. There is a significant need to have proper governance, less corruption, improved market intelligence, the introduction of innovative approaches in sustainable practices, market development, investment and financing. There is also a need of inclusion of the small farmers in the local value chains as a way to increase the competitiveness and access to the markets which can be achieved through education, access to technology, access to finance, policy support and innovation.

Scope

An urgent goal is to increase the profitability of smallholders by tackling technical, organisational and social challenges while at the same time being sustainable. The agro-ecosystem and the social system at stake in this type of farming must be considered together, and a strong focus on the social system is required. Proposals should revisit organisational aspects, i.e. new models of organisation of farmers, enabling them to process transformation at the farm level, new value chain governance including short and circular value chain models are to be developed.

Sustainable small-scale processes adapted to weak agricultural systems should be coupled to by-products valorisation according to the EU Circular Economy Action Plan.¹ These models need to consider a triple bottom line approach (economic, social, and environmental); and if possible, be technology-enabled for scaling and efficiency.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/>

Proposals should exploit the multifunctional potential of Mediterranean smallholder farming systems (including livestock production systems) combining sustainable production practices with other sustainable income sources allowing value creation both locally and at the international level (eco-tourism, local products direct selling, landscape fruition, traditional cultural heritage, etc.). The quality of the local products and their valorisation through small farm processing units (simple transformation and or processing) is to be considered, as well as the possible interconnections among these units.

Within each of the main targets, an integrated and participatory approach involving multiple disciplines and actors concerned (farmers, manufacturers, logistic suppliers, etc.) should be stimulated considering the following logic framework:

A - a detailed diagnosis of the situations; B - an ex-ante co-design of innovations; C - an implementation of innovations.

Activities must be implemented in living labs or with value-oriented approach Based on Demo, including a cost-benefit assessment of the tested innovations addressing the different dimensions of sustainability.

The approach to be proposed should be based on two main targets: i) Profitability, i.e. promote inclusive and sustainable rural development, with a specific focus on poverty eradication, women's empowerment and youth employment, including equitable and sustainable access to essential local services for rural communities and ii) Resilience and environmental sustainability, i.e. improve the resilience of Mediterranean smallholder farming systems to climate change and the sustainability of concerned agro-ecosystems through ecological approaches. These include increased use of functional biodiversity and especially agrobiodiversity, organic farming and sustainable land and water use management.

Expected Impacts

- Enable access to markets, i.e. ensure access of local producers to distribution channels and markets, providing the general population with healthy and sustainable products.
- Increase the income of the farmers, also including other possible agricultural-linked income sources and ensure transparency and fair pricing structure along the value chain.
- Promote access to work of young farmers and women.
- Improve sustainable food production systems with efficient use of natural resources and with eco-friendly processes with low GHG emission.
- Reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses and potentially valorising the waste left.

Key Performance indicators

- Number of innovations in farming systems developed, enabling sustainable and efficient agriculture and food systems.

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 Partnerships²

² Horizon Europe Partnerships: https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe/european-partnerships-horizon-europe/candidates-food-security_en

- Farm to Fork Strategy³
- Biodiversity Strategy⁴
- Horizon Europe Mission on Soil Health and Food⁵
- 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 **Links with SDGs**
- 2.3: By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.
- 2.4: By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought and water scarcity, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.
- 12.2: By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources
- 12.3: By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.
- 12.5: By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

³ 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

⁴ 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

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe/missions-horizon-europe/soil-health-and-food_en

Supporting information for the Section 1 Call for Proposals, Topic 1.2.1

Type of action	Innovation Action (IA)
Total indicative amount allocated to this call	EUR 8.25 million
Funding level	According to Horizon 2020 Rules 70% (except for non-profit legal entities, where a rate of 100% applies)
Technology Readiness levels (TRL)	IA 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 the grants	PRIMA considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU in the range of EUR 2.75 million and with a duration of 36 months 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 (maximum ten pages) 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 (maximum 50 pages). 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.