

ANNEX

Annual Work Plan 2023

for the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA)



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

**PRIMA Partnership for Research and Innovation
in the Mediterranean Area**

Decision\ (EU) 2017/1324
Delegation Agreement H2020 PRIMA

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Glossary

AC	Associated Country
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BoT	Board of Trustees
CIHEAM	Centre International de Hautes Études Agronomiques Méditerranéennes
CoP	Community of Practice
EEA	European Environment Agency
EC	European Commission
EIP	European Innovation Partnership
EIT	European Institute of Innovation & Technology
ENI-CBC-MED	Cross Border Cooperation Within the European Neighbourhood Instrument - Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
H2020	Horizon 2020
HE	Horizon Europe
IA	Innovation Action
ICARDA	International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
IO	International Organisation
JPI	Joint Programming Initiative
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MED	Mediterranean
MedECC	Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change
MENA	The Middle East and North Africa region
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
MPCs	Mediterranean Partner Country
NCPs	National Contact Points
NFA	National Funding Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PRIMA	Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area
PRIMA-IS	PRIMA- Implementation Structure
PSC	PRIMA Stakeholder Community
PS	Participating States
PSIAs	Participating States' Initiated Activities
R&I	Research and Innovation
RIA	Research and Innovation Action based on Horizon 2020 rules
RoC	Rules of Contest
SAC	Scientific Advisory Committee
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRIA	Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
TC	Third Country
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UNEP-MAP	United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan
WEFE	Water Energy Food Ecosystems

NOTICE:

For **UK** applicants: Please be aware that following the entry into force of the EU, UK Withdrawal Agreement [\[1\]](#) on 1 February 2020, the references to natural or legal persons residing or established in a Member State of the European Union are to be understood as including natural or legal persons residing or established in the United Kingdom. Therefore, UK residents and entities are eligible to participate in calls in this Annual Work Plan.

EU restrictive measures - Entities subject to EU restrictive measures under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU), as well as Article 75 TFEU are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, linked third parties, international partners, third parties providing in-kind contributions, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

Legal entities established in Russia, Belarus, or in non-government controlled territories of Ukraine — Given the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the involvement of Belarus, there is currently no appropriate context allowing the implementation of the actions foreseen in this programme with legal entities established in Russia, Belarus, or in non-government controlled territories of Ukraine. Therefore, even where such entities are not subject to EU restrictive measures, such legal entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity. This includes participation as beneficiaries, linked third parties, international partners, third parties providing in-kind contributions, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

DISCLAIMER:

This document is a draft and is provided for information only. The information contained herein is subject to change and does not prejudice the final form of any future decision to be taken by PRIMA and by the Commission.

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Introduction

PRIMA is a long-term European partnership aiming to foster joint research and innovation approaches among Mediterranean countries to improve water availability, sustainable agriculture, and food production in a region heavily distressed by climate change, urbanisation, and population growth.

PRIMA aims to support the transition towards greener, more inclusive, healthier Mediterranean societies' transformation, stretching the EU Green Deal to South Mediterranean countries.

Through its annual work plans, PRIMA will contribute to solving water scarcity, food security, nutrition, health, well-being and migration problems contributing significantly to the [2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), notably in the Mediterranean region.

The scale of the research and innovation necessary to address the challenges in the Mediterranean area is immense due to the systemic character of the major bottlenecks.

An appropriate mobilisation and provision of financial resources, a new technological and organisational framework, and enhanced capacity development are needed to reach these ambitious goals.

Through a collaborative, cross-boundary approach among the PRIMA Participating States, the PRIMA programme focuses on common problems, aligning national programmes and increasing the required scale and scope by pooling financial and intellectual resources.

With this aim, PRIMA Participant Participating States ('PS') have developed a long-term [Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda](#) (SRIA), representing the cornerstone of strengthening research and innovation efforts.

The joint efforts will improve Mediterranean citizens' health and livelihoods, encouraging economic growth, and inducing more sustainable Mediterranean societies and stability.

PRIMA SRIA is the reference document for all the actors involved in PRIMA towards implementing the partnership.

As of 10 April 2018, the PRIMA partnership includes 19 Participating States (PS): Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey.

The Partnership has a robust strategic dimension based on equal footing applied through co-decision, co-financing and co-management and a distinctive geographical focus on the Mediterranean region.

Based on the Decision (EU) 2017/1324 of the European Parliament and the Council of 4 July 2017 ([PRIMA Decision](#))¹, the PRIMA partnership ran from 7 August 2017 to 31 December 2028. The European Union (EU) has decided to support the programme with a maximum financial contribution of EUR 220 000 000 (Article 3 of Decision (EU) 2017/1324) from the Horizon 2020 programme's Societal Challenge 2 ('Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine, maritime and inland water research, and the bio-economy') and Societal Challenge 5 ('Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials') and Industrial Leadership (Nanotechnologies, advanced materials, advanced manufacturing and processing, biotechnology). The Union's financial contribution conditions are outlined set out in Article 4 of Decision (EU) 2017/1324.

¹ Decision (EU) 2017/1324 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2017 on the participation of the Union in the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) jointly undertaken by several Member States (OJ L 185, 18.7.2017, p. 1).

The programme is implemented by the PRIMA Foundation, established in Barcelona in 2017 as a dedicated implementation structure, which has been entrusted by the European Commission to manage the budget implementation tasks of the PRIMA partnership under Article 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).²

The PRIMA Implementation Structure, legally established as a private entity under Spanish law in Barcelona, Spain, is also referred to in this document as "PRIMA-IS".

² Article 26(2), point (b),) of the Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 of the European Parliament and of the of 11 December 2013 establishing Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) and repealing Decision No 1982/2006/EC (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 104).

Implementation of the PRIMA programme: PRIMA thematic areas

The PRIMA-IS implements the PRIMA programme based on Annual Work Plans.

PRIMA Annual Work Plans are developed in compliance with the general and specific objectives and provisions set out in Article 2 of Decision (EU) 2017/1324, based on the priorities described in the PRIMA SRIA under the three thematic areas addressed by the programme, namely:

1. **Thematic Area 1** Integrated and sustainable management of water for arid and semi-arid Mediterranean areas
2. **Thematic Area 2** Sustainable farming systems under Mediterranean environmental constraints
3. **Thematic Area 3** Sustainable Mediterranean food value chain for regional and local development

An additional **“WEFE- Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems- Nexus theme”** has been included in PRIMA calls as of 2019 to reach PRIMA's objectives.

In the context of climate change, demographic growth and inefficient resource management, the nexus approach helps to strike a balance between resources and avoid prioritising specific resource uses. Applying it to policy interventions generates important information about synergies and trade-offs across several resource-related goals to contribute to more effective management strategies.

Nexus solutions are the missing link to relieve long-standing issues for which the conventional sectoral approach is not sufficiently working to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The resource nexus concept fulfils this need, specifically looking at resource interlinkages between water, energy and food and their reliance and impact on ecosystems.

This approach is also at the core of European policies, e.g., in the European Green Deal that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy, no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use.

PRIMA is fostering the nexus thinking in all its present and future calls to enable the shift towards environmentally sustainable Mediterranean economies. PRIMA intends to streamline the nexus approach for most projects, which is now a distinctive feature and an added value of the Programme in all its future actions.

PRIMA partnership structure

The PRIMA partnership is implemented according a three-sections funding scheme, as illustrated in Figure 1. In principle, PRIMA actions and activities are implemented following Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation ('RfP')³. Nonetheless, specific rules concerning participation and funding rates apply to the activities implemented with national funds. Each of the sections refers to the following:

Section 1: Actions and activities organised, managed and funded by the PRIMA-IS4 with EU funds according to H2020 RfP.

Section 1 encompasses

- 1.1 Actions organised and funded by PRIMA-IS through transnational calls (EU contribution)
- 1.2 Activities supporting programme operations funded (EU contribution) and implemented by the PRIMA-IS

Section 2: Activities selected following transnational open and competitive calls for proposals organised by PRIMA-IS and funded by the national funding bodies of PS.

Section 2 encompasses:

- 2.1 Activities following transnational calls organised by PRIMA-IS and funded by the PRIMA Participant States
- 2.2 Activities supporting programme PRIMA operations funded and implemented by the PRIMA-IS

Section 3: Activities organised, managed and funded by the PS

Section 3 encompasses:

- 3.1 Activities under the national programmes of the Participating States, including transnational projects referred to as "Participating States' Initiated Activities" (PSIAs);
- 3.2 Activities organised and funded by PS supporting PRIMA programme implementation are "Other Activities" in this annual work plan.

While Section 1 actions and activities are funded by EU funds from the H2020 Research and Innovation Framework Programme, Section 2 and Section 3 activities are funded by Participating State's funds.

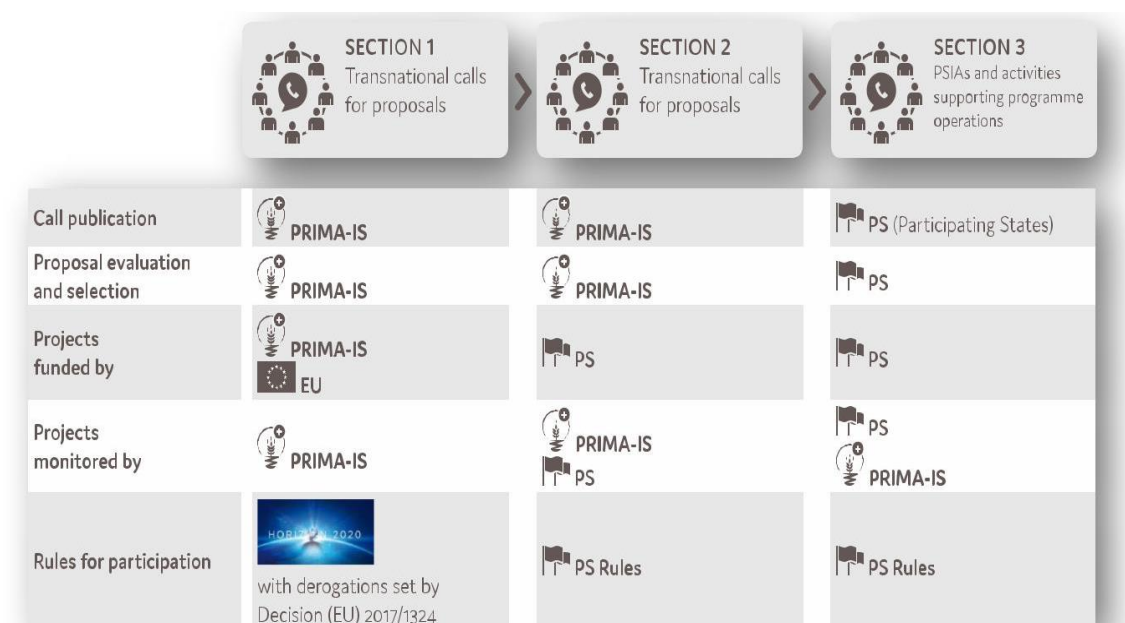
Section 1 and Section 2 call activities, including proposal evaluation and selection, are managed by PRIMA-IS. The Participating States entirely manage Section 3 activities. As for the Rules of participation, Section 1 actions follow H2020 RfP, while Section 2 and Section 3 are implemented according to national regulations.

The following Figure illustrates for each Section (1, 2 or 3) the source of funds (whether EU financial contribution or Participant States' contributions), the entity managing the calls and the rules of participation in PRIMA activities.

³ Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 laying down the rules for participation and dissemination in "Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)" and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006, (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 81).

⁴ In line with Article 3(3), point (a), of Decision (EU) 2017/1324, this funding is covered by Union financial contribution. However, where appropriate, PS may also arrange for financial contributions to cover costs of indirect actions funded by PRIMA-IS (Article 5(2), point (a)).

Figure 1 PRIMA programme architecture



PRIMA AWP2023 rationale

The European Union and the Southern Mediterranean region face common challenges such as climate change, food security, water scarcity and unsustainable agrifood systems, which can only be addressed through cooperation at an international level.

In this context, PRIMA partnership aims to address the most pressing challenges in the region, strengthening long-term regional cooperation, in alignment with the EU cooperation framework with Southern Neighbourhood Countries as expressed in the Joint Communication for a [New Agenda for the Mediterranean](#) and the regional policy dialogue with Mediterranean partners endorsed at the [UfM Regional Platform in Research and Innovation](#).

In particular, PRIMA can play an important role to accelerate the much-needed transition towards a green economy in the region fostering green and sustainable development solutions to increase the resilience to climate change, thus contributing to the European Green Deal objectives in the region.

PRIMA will contribute to these challenges through a collaborative approach by launching annual calls for proposals with EU funds jointly with its Participant States under the EU Framework Programme H2020.

The Mediterranean is one of the world areas most affected by climate change. Its limited natural resources are continuously endangered by demographic pressure and the lack of sustainable economic development strategies.

In the Mediterranean, as pointed out in the [IPCC Sixth Assessment Report](#), increasing climate warming and population growth will put even more pressure on the availability of food, energy and water, with severe implications for the future of ecosystems and biodiversity, which can affect the Mediterranean population's livelihoods.

The IPCC Sixth Report documents how threats to food security and nutrition from droughts, floods, heatwaves, and sea-level rise in the region are already materialising and growing due to global warming.

Moreover, population growth, especially in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, is often coupled with food insecurity resulting in continuous demand for food, mostly imported products.

This is exacerbated by periodic political crises and social unrest, leading to rising unemployment (especially among the youth) and migration.

This complicated situation has been further aggravated by the impact of the [Covid-19 pandemic](#), with undesirable impacts on health and related public expenditure and the cultural, social, economic, and environmental sustainability of livelihoods across the Mediterranean.

While the world is still attempting to recover from the recession triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, the war of aggression against Ukraine provokes an enormous crisis, with massive disruptions to the wheat supply and food security severely affecting economies globally and in particular in the Mediterranean region.

The rise of inflation resulted from the increased demand caused by the economic recovery and the continued disruption of many value chains, which was sharply accelerated by the war, of aggression putting food, energy and significant commodity prices under pressure.

The wheat market is where food security concerns are mainly concentrated. Prices of wheat have increased by 130% since the invasion, impacting those countries relying on imports for their cereal need.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), several of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries, including Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, and Morocco, rely on Russia and Ukraine for at least thirty per cent of their wheat imports⁵.

After four years of its implementation (from 2018 to 2021), the PRIMA programme funded 168 collaborative research projects contributing to improving agro-food systems, security, sustainability and integrated water provision and management in the Mediterranean area.

PRIMA projects selected so far are producing both technological innovations (i.e., cost-effective technologies for wastewater treatment, food processing technologies, precision irrigation technologies) with TRLs spanning from 3-7 and social/institutional innovations.

Out of the 168 funded projects, 37 were selected under the water management thematic area, 81 projects under the farming systems thematic area, 43 projects under the agri-food value chain thematic area and 7 projects under the nexus theme considering the interconnection among water, energy, food and ecosystems (WEFE).

Figure 2 PRIMA projects breakdown per each priority under thematic area water management⁶



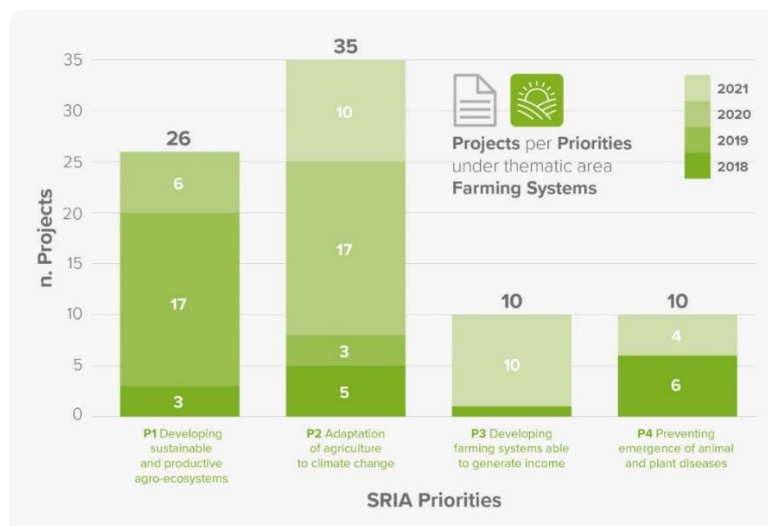
Water projects are producing water-saving irrigation solutions making the most of the possibilities offered by the digitalisation of the water sector but also technologies to increase water management sustainability and reinforce water circularity by exploiting non-conventional water resources (desalinisation, wastewater).

Concerning farming projects funded so far, several are dealing with farming systems' adaptation to protect natural resources and increase adaptation and resilience to climate change through regenerative agriculture practices (integrating crop and livestock farming, using cover crops, minimising chemical inputs, increasing biodiversity, and rotating crops). Restoring ecosystems will help increase agricultural productivity, reduce food security risks, and enhance food system resilience. Moreover, as an outcome of the 2021 calls, PRIMA has funded projects to promote sustainable land management, avoid further

⁵ <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9236en/cb9236en.pdf>

degradation and support the restoration of already degraded lands in the region through agroecological practices and nature-based solutions.

Figure 3 PRIMA projects breakdown per each priority under thematic area water management



Food projects funded from 2018 to 2021 mainly focus on the implementation of innovation in agro-food agri-food systems: through value addition through traceability, sustainable packaging and processing, and food waste management to valorise by-products of the food industry into high-value ones and facilitate the transition towards a greener, more sustainable production and consumption systems in the Mediterranean, delivering co-benefits for climate (mitigation and adaptation) and people through safer, more nutritious and healthier diets.

Figure 4 PRIMA projects breakdown per each priority under thematic area agri-food value chain



Finally, in 2019 PRIMA proposed a NEXUS THEME to address the interlinkages among water, energy, food, and natural ecosystems.

This Annual Work Plan will contribute to halting and reversing land degradation, better managing natural resources, preventing pollution, preventing food waste and food loss, and ensuring food and water security in the Mediterranean by developing R&I actions around the orientation lines reported in the following section.

PRIMA AWP2023 orientation lines:

A. Integrated adaptive wastewater management plans in the Mediterranean

Considering the strategic importance of increasing water quality and quantity in the Mediterranean and the relevance of the alignment with the newly established PRIMA EU Mission “Restore our oceans and waters by 2030” objectives, the PRIMA Scientific Advisory Committee is proposing this orientation line for the Annual Work Plan 2023, to address the recovery of both organic and inorganic pollutants with a more systemic approach. This orientation has the potential to contribute to solving multiple problems at once: nutrient pollution, eutrophication, increasing prices of fertilizers and lack of access to/depletion of raw phosphates, need to preserve soils and boost their nutrient fixing capacity, water scarcity and depletion of water resources in the Mediterranean, water pollution including pollution from pollutants of emerging concern.

Similar topics were addressed in 2018, calls to enhance the use of treated wastewater and desalinated water in agriculture and aquifer recharge, and in 2022, calls to address the contamination of water streams due to agricultural pesticides and other organic pollutants. A holistic and systemic approach would now be needed; integrating the different solutions developed already by projects implemented in the region have the potential to offer a part of the solution. However, to effectively recycle nutrients and wastewater reuse without further spreading pollution, other pollutants, i.e. microplastic pollution in wastewater and pollution from pharmaceutical products, hormone analogues, potential endocrine disruptors and other emerging pollutants that are not removed from wastewater, should be considered.

With this action, PRIMA will contribute to delivering the European Green Deal objectives and, in particular, to the [Zero pollution Action Plan](#)⁷ aiming to ensure a safe environment with minimal air, water, soil and consumer products pollution. PRIMA projects selected from under this orientation line are expected to build links with the HE Mission, particularly with the Mission lighthouse in the Mediterranean Sea basin supported by the Mission, which focuses on piloting solutions for the prevention and elimination of pollution.

This orientation will also contribute to implementing several Union key policies, for example, the new Common Agricultural Policy, Directive 2000/60/EC⁸, [EU Water Framework Directive \(WFD\)](#)⁹, and the implementation of the recently adopted Union for the Mediterranean (‘UfM’) [an Environment and Climate declaration](#) through the UfM [2030GreenerMed Agenda](#)¹⁰ Thematic Axis 2, Key Action KA2.2. aiming to “put a particular focus on plastic pollution, marine litter, and other inorganic and organic pollution sources”.

7 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Pathway to a Healthy Planet for All EU Action Plan: 'Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil', COM/2021/400 final

8 Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy" (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000)

9 Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1)

10 Agenda was named "Towards 2030: Agenda for a Greener Med - Contributing to Achieving the Environmental SDGs in the Mediterranean" (2030GreenerMed)

B. Sustainable water management and strategies for conflict mitigation

The PRIMA Scientific Advisory Committee is proposing this orientation line, focusing on governance solutions for the provision of water services in a context characterised by climate change. While technical solutions developed by PRIMA-funded projects are available, governance solutions for water resources are shared, and fair allocation of water resources to different users through limits on water use still needs to be developed. This orientation aims the creation of socioeconomic instruments, governance, and organisation to define water-use limits in certain key regions under present and future global change scenarios. Considering the competing water demand exacerbated by demographic growth and climate change, Mediterranean countries' food security could be compromised. Significant conflicts have already been observed between the different water users (agriculture, industry, tourism, households, etc.). Their mutual reliance and competition are simultaneously part of the problem and the solution, thus making indispensable an approach to natural resources management that addresses the interdependencies between the Water, Energy, Food and Ecosystem (WEFE) sectors. To anticipate conflict risks that could further destabilize the political situation in the region, it seems necessary to support countries to identify, under conditions of climate change, the potential conflict risks and to offer them communication and governance models within the framework of a robust process. This approach should be considered at the regional, national, or even local level within the same country.

C. To combat desertification and restore degraded lands in the Mediterranean region

Desertification¹¹ is a growing threat in the Mediterranean region.

Projections on climate change in the Mediterranean region show that the risk of desertification is increasing, mainly due to climate change impacts and the effects of unsuitable land management practices. Hot semi-deserts already exist in southern Europe, where the climate transforms from temperate to dry. Notwithstanding the EU commitment to achieving land degradation neutrality in the EU by 2030, there has not been a full assessment of land degradation at the EU level (nor in the Mediterranean region), and no methodology has been agreed upon on how to do so.

PRIMA funded, in 2021, projects addressing the prevention of desertification in the Mediterranean region. Those projects mainly focus on the drivers and state framework and do not address the impacts.

In AWP2022, PRIMA has started collaborating with the EU Mission “A Soil Deal for Europe”, jointly proposing a topic entitled “Developing [integrated soil data for the Mediterranean region: a gateway for sustainable soil management](#)” meant to establish a common set of indicators to understand and identify knowledge requirements for soil monitoring in each country as a first step.

For its Annual Work Plan2023, PRIMA and EU Mission “A Soil Deal for Europe”, have jointly defined a topic to scale up at a regional scale already tested solutions aiming at the restoration of degraded land. Collaboration between PRIMA and the HE is foreseen at the project level, where proposals should include dedicated tasks and appropriate resources for coordination measures and joint activities.

¹¹ Following the historical Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) entered into force in 1996, defining desertification as a process of land degradation in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas of the world that is the result of natural phenomena (e.g. climate variation) and anthropogenic factors.

D. Fostering the circular economy and bioeconomy solutions along food systems value chains

The green and circular economy solutions along food systems value chains are essential to safeguard already threatened resources and ecosystems to produce sufficient food for the Mediterranean communities. The Mediterranean farming systems urgently need to optimize the use of external resources by implementing a circular economy approach into their production systems.

Responses to this overall challenge might arise from the development of circular systems facilitating the recovery and subsequent reuse of main inputs by integrating local renewable energy sources.

Food systems transformation is necessarily coupled with circular and green concepts, as highlighted by the UfM GreenerMed Agenda Axis 1 (to support the transition to a green, circular and socially inclusive economy based on sustainable consumption and production practices) and nature-based solutions¹²), aligned with the [EU Farm to Fork Strategy](#). The UN SDG 2 achievement also depends on a leap toward greener solutions through circular food production practices as levers for a 'zero hunger' farming system.

PRIMA intends to increase the resilience and profitability of Mediterranean smallholder actors while increasing the resilience to climate change. However, PRIMA has already funded projects supporting the circular economy in the Region, valorising, by-products and the extraction of newly added value products.

Despite several PRIMA projects implementing a circular approach in their production systems, PRIMA calls have not explicitly supported actions coupling renewable energy deployment for agri-food systems. They are crucial to meet the objectives of the European Green Deal of climate neutrality while increasing the resilience and profitability of Mediterranean smallholder actors.

E. Reducing food waste through smart, sustainable packaging materials

The estimated acceleration of climate change over the next few years, combined with population growth, threatens food security in the Mediterranean region. The situation is alarming, particularly in the southern shore of the Mediterranean region, which largely depends on food imports. Price volatility due to the international market and the potential impacts of political and military conflicts such as the one in Ukrainian war are serious threats. In this context, food waste has been identified as a primary concern for food security and the sustainability of food systems.

Food contamination and spoilage are still the leading cause of limiting shelf-life and food safety. Packaging is essential to prevent food deterioration resulting in extended shelf-life of food and reducing foodborne illness outbreaks and food recalls.

Due to environmental problems, biodegradable packaging materials are gaining significant attention as sustainable, environmentally friendly, and cost-effective alternatives to conventional plastic packaging materials.

The transition towards nutritious, safe food systems produced with minimum impact on nature is very much consistent with the European Green Deal¹³, [Farm to Fork Strategy](#), [the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#), [the Circular Economy Action Plan](#) and the general objective of the future [Horizon Europe Partnership "Safe and Sustainable Food Systems"](#) towards healthier and more sustainable food systems.

¹² Solutions that are inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social, and economic benefits and help build resilience. Such solutions bring more, and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes, and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient, and systemic interventions.

¹³ ['The European Green Deal' \(COM\(2019\) 640\)](#)

Food shortage due to world crises such as the recent Ukrainian war is considered a serious threat to food security, affecting the region that needs quick action to reduce its negative impacts. So far, a few PRIMA projects have been funded on new food packaging materials to control food hazards. This orientation aims to support the development of new antibacterial packaging materials that will control microbial growth, improve the quality, and increase the shelf life of food products. Such a new application will reduce food waste, thus increasing food availability in the Mediterranean area.

F. Strengthening the local food value chain to increase resilience to external crises

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine directly impacts global food security and affordability, particularly in some Mediterranean countries, which greatly depend on agricultural exports such as grains, vegetable oils and fertilizers from Russia and/or Ukraine. To tackle the problem, it is essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of it and a detailed insight into the dynamics of food systems and market stressors and identify solutions to reduce reliance on the global market, such as for example investing in local production, reducing food waste and loss, entering into new trade agreements with alternative trade partners, for the import of food. This theme is also aligned with the R&I actions defined under the future Horizon Europe Partnership “Accelerating farming systems transition: agroecology living labs and research infrastructures”.

G. To foster the adoption of an integrated Nexus approach of water, energy, food, and ecosystems (WEFE Nexus) to enhance the sustainable use of natural resources to achieve sustainable development goals under the UN Agenda 2030 in the region

The Mediterranean region is one of the most sensitive to climate change globally. Long-term monitoring data show that the Mediterranean region has become warmer and drier during the last half-century, with increased extreme events. Moreover, climate change impacts in the Mediterranean region are expected to become even more severe in the following years. In this AWP, PRIMA intends to support the use of the WEFE Nexus approach as a tool in climate adaptation and mitigation strategies by designing and integrating Nexus solutions into existing climate change National Adaptation Plans (NAP) at the sectoral level, to build resilient systems, harmonise interventions, and mitigate trade-offs and hence improve sustainability.

Under these changing conditions, the Mediterranean region's water, energy and food consumption and production sectors and their links with ecosystems are highly vulnerable. Their mutual reliance and competition make indispensable an approach to natural resources management that addresses the interdependencies between the Water, Energy, Food and Ecosystem (WEFE) sectors, i.e., the development and the regional deployment of a WEFE Nexus approach.

Current sectoral approaches to climate change adaptation often create imbalances among the sectors. However, as reported in the Sixth Assessment Report (IPCC), climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy focus on a sectoral approach and one part of the water- energy-food-ecosystems nexus without considering their interconnections and synergies, risks serious maladaptation consequences. PRIMA started to launch calls supporting actions for deploying a WEFE approach in 2019 with a call for RIAs aiming to assess the social, economic and environmental benefits of adopting an integrated (nexus approach) in managing WEFE resources in the Mediterranean region as a means to convince policymakers of adopting such an approach in the region.

With a similar objective in 2020, PRIMA launched a call for Innovation Actions aiming to demonstrate the benefits of adopting a WEFE approach at various demo sites

characterized by diverse climate conditions and socio-economic development, while Innovation Actions selected from 2021 calls addressed the operationalization of the Nexus solutions to be translated into specific policy-making processes.

Beyond immediate or delayed effects on the biophysical state of Water, Energy, Food and Ecosystem resources, which have been considered in previous PRIMA calls, PRIMA launched a call in 2022 on the socio-economic impacts of a Nexus approach to the governance of WEFE resources.

To operationalise the WEFE Nexus, maximise the exchange of experiences and best practices and identify solutions that may be broadly applied across the Mediterranean region, PRIMA launched a call for a Coordination Support Action (CSA) in 2022 to establish a WEFE Nexus Community of practice engaging relevant Mediterranean practitioners and stakeholders, including policymakers, decision-makers, and investors, to ensure a significant impact.

The concept of such a WEFE Nexus Community of practice, which was the tangible outcome of the WEFE Nexus Sciences Advances Conference co-organised in September 2021, was endorsed by the Ministers from the Mediterranean countries as well as by European Commission delegates, recognising the leading role of PRIMA in the development of this initiative.

PRIMA projects should contribute to the WEFE Community of practice by networking selected demonstration sites, knowledge-sharing and capacity building.

Policy context

Guided by the overarching 2030 UN Agenda of Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, and the current key priority EU policies such as the European Green Deal and the new [EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change](#), and the [EU Water Framework Directive \(WFD\)](#), this Annual Work Plan will contribute to important EU policy initiatives such as the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#), the [Biodiversity Strategy](#), the [Zero pollution Action Plan](#) and the upcoming [Integrated Nutrient Management Action Plan](#) to be adopted in 2023 aiming to promote more efficient use of nutrients. This annual work plan will also contribute to recently adopted [EU Communication Ensuring availability and affordability of fertilisers](#) and is consistent with the [EU actions to enhance global food security](#) that have been issued in response to the impacts of the Russian's invasion to ensure that global food security is restored through international cooperation.

Promoting cooperation based on equal footing in line with the [Barcelona Declaration](#), PRIMA's activities contribute substantially to narrowing the R&I and, consequently, the socio-economic divide in the Southern and Eastern neighbourhoods, thereby enhancing peace and stability.

In this sense, PRIMA Annual Work Plan 2023 is aligned with the Green transition: climate resilience, energy, and environment key action identified in the "[Joint Communication on a renewed partnership for the Southern Neighbourhood](#)" called "[The new Agenda for the Mediterranean](#)". This agenda will guide the cooperation 2021-2027 with the Southern Neighbourhood countries, which have also been recalled in the

recently adopted EU communication on Europe's Global Approach to Research and Innovation¹⁴, [Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world](#). These priorities align with the UfM policy framework, including [UfM Ministerial Declaration on the UfM Water Agenda](#), the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change, and the [Valletta Declaration on Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation through Research and Innovation](#).

¹⁴ COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on the Global Approach to Research and Innovation Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world, COM/2021/252 final

PRIMA Actions in 2023 calls

AWP 2023 is structured around five calls for proposals:

- four Section 1 separate calls: (four topics one call for each topic)
- one multi-topic Section 2 call (three topics)

The AWP 2023 includes Innovation Actions (IAs), with activities demonstrating technology or organisational model validation and market replication, and Research and Innovation Actions (RIAs), exploring new areas and technologies.

PRIMA foresees that approximately thirty projects will be funded out of 2023 calls, consisting of a balanced mix of demonstrators with new technologies into operation or organisational innovations (TRL 6-8) and research activities with lower TRL to pave the way for future innovation and capitalisation potential (TRL 3-5).

As a general approach, Research and Innovation Actions in the AWP 2023 include **socio-economic aspects** involving social sciences, a cross-cutting issue that engages society and ensures access to research outcomes.

[The gender dimension](#) must always be considered in the proposals.

PRIMA encourages consortia to apply their project ["Multi-Actor Approach" \(MAA\)](#)

"A Multi-Actor Approach should ensure genuine and sufficient involvement of a targeted diversity of actors, essentially the (end-) users of the project results completed with some useful intermediaries who can bring in further useful knowledge, such as farmers/farmers' groups, foresters/foresters' groups, advisors, food processors, businesses, consumer associations, local communities, citizens, civil society organisations including NGOs etc. The genuine and sufficient involvement of such actors should occur all along with the project: from participation in planning the project and experiments to implementation, the dissemination of results, and a possible demonstration phase. Building blocks for the project proposal are expected to come from science, practice, and intermediaries ("co-creation"). End-users and practitioners are to be involved, not as a study object, but to use their local knowledge and/or entrepreneurial skills for developing solutions and creating "co-ownership" of results, which speeds up the acceptance and take-up of new ideas."

All proposals are strongly encouraged to include **capacity-development activities** to develop capacities at many levels: individual, organisational and/or community levels. Specific training activities are strongly suggested in the scope of the topics proposed.

Finally, in line with PRIMA principles of allowing maximum participation from Southern Mediterranean Countries, thus **fostering South-South collaborations among Mediterranean Countries**, PRIMA is considering additional eligibility criteria that should apply to each call: *"In addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the standard eligibility conditions (section 5.1.3), consortia must include at least one independent legal entity established in any of the MPCs¹⁵*. The places of the establishment of the legal entities must cover at least two different specific regions in the MPCs.

¹⁵ Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) are considered the Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey and the Third third Countries (TC) having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco

Supporting activities to increase the impact

To facilitate the taking over of PRIMA outputs and to facilitate the market uptake after the projects are completed, the following actions are foreseen by PRIMA:

PRIMA projects can take advantage of the [Horizon Result Booster](#), a package of specialised services provided free of charge, to ongoing or closed projects funded under the H2020 and Horizon Europe framework programme to maximise the impact of R&I projects funded by the EU and increase the exploitation potential of their research results. Under the Horizon Results Booster services, PRIMA projects consortia might improve their existing exploitation strategy, develop a business and go-to-market strategies that build commercialisation plans, explore implementation options and identify funding strategies.

Potential ways of cooperation between PRIMA and DG NEAR will be explored to discuss to which extent NDICI instruments could complement PRIMA's efforts and could potentially contribute to ensure a greater uptake and maximisation of this project's sustainability.

Synergies and Complementarities of European and International Initiatives

Synergies with EU programmes and initiatives

- Project proponents should consider and actively seek **synergies** with national, regional, and EU research and innovation programmes such as Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe projects, with EU Missions, notably the EU Mission “A Soil Deal for Europe” and with other relevant EU programmes (such as the [Water and Environment Support \(WES\)](#), the [SwitchMed programme](#), the [Interreg NEXT MED programme 2021-2027](#) the EU initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean region ([WESTMed Initiative](#)), mainly focusing on priority 6 concerning Sustainable consumption and production. PRIMA will seek synergies with the regional, multi-country and bilateral Flagship initiatives 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 as described in the Joint Staff Working Document accompanying the Joint Communication on the Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood_” [A New Agenda for the Mediterranean.](#)”
- PRIMA will further strengthen cooperation with the ENI Cross-Border Cooperation ([ENI-CBC MED](#)), pushing both organisations' shared interest in supporting regional integration and development. This common objective will be achieved by creating thematic clusters based on a joint analysis of PRIMA and ENI-CBC MED projects. Thematic clusters will be instrumental in fostering knowledge exchange, strengthening synergies and complementarities among projects, benchmarking results cross-contamination, and enhancing links with a broader community of stakeholders.
- In this Annual Work Plan 2023, PRIMA proposes topics in close collaboration with EU Missions: notably [EU Mission “Restore our oceans and waters by 2030”](#); [EU Mission “A Soil Deal for Europe”](#)). Moreover, PRIMA intends to collaborate closely with the EU Partnerships with a similar thematic focus, such [as the European Partnership Water Security for the Planet and the EU European Partnership Rescuing Biodiversity to Safeguard Life on Earth.](#) PRIMA will also explore collaborations with EU Mission “Adaptation to Climate change” and EU

partnerships planned to start in 2023, such as [Safe and sustainable food systems for people, planet & climate](#); [Agro-ecology living labs and research infrastructures](#); [Agriculture of data](#); [Animal health and welfare](#). Those collaborations will ensure that PRIMA complement its strategic priorities and avoid overlapping.

- PRIMA is complementary to the [Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture \(FNSSA\)](#) priority of the [EU-African Union research and innovation cooperation](#). The FNSSA priority allows PRIMA partners to further pan-African and cross-European collaboration.

Synergies with relevant regional organisations

- PRIMA is fully supporting the dialogue outcomes of the [Union for the Mediterranean \(UfM\)](#) task forces [Environment Task force](#) to implement UfM post-2020 Environment Agenda, so-called "Towards 2030: Agenda for a Greener Med Contributing to achieving the Environmental SDGs in the Mediterranean" ([2030GreenerMed Agenda](#)) aiming to operationalise the [UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate](#) adopted in Cairo on the 4th October 2021. PRIMA has been indicated in the Declaration among the initiatives and [MEDECC](#) and [BLUEMED](#)¹⁶, enhancing cooperation and research on climate action and the environment.
- The PRIMA partnership is consistent with the UfM R&I regional platform's Roadmaps adopted during the UfM ministerial meeting in June 2022.
- PRIMA is also collaborating with the UfM, FAO CIHEAM and [One Planet network's Sustainable Food Systems Programme](#) in a Multi-stakeholder Sustainable Food Systems Platform in the Mediterranean to foster a common understanding of the complex environment of Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) in the global context.

¹⁶ Initiative for Blue Jobs and Growth in the Mediterranean Region

1 Section 1: Actions and activities organised, managed and funded by the PRIMA-IS with EU funds, according to H2020 Rules.

1.1 Actions organised and funded by PRIMA-IS through transnational calls (EU contribution)

Actions are evaluated, selected, and funded according to the [Rules for Participation of Horizon 2020](#) according to a two-stage submission process and are centrally managed by the PRIMA-IS.

[Grant agreements](#) are to be signed with PRIMA-IS based on the H2020 Model Grant Agreement.¹⁷

In Section 1, activities of the PRIMA programme are supported along with the following types of actions: Research and Innovation Action (RIA), Innovation Action (IA), and financial contributions given as rewards following the publication of a contest (Prizes) as defined in Section [5.1.4](#) of this document.

While RIAs in Section 1 refer to Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 3-5, IAs refer to TRL 6-8 as set out in Section [5.1.6](#) of this document.

IAs should include activities directly aiming at producing plans and arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services. For this purpose, they may include prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting, large-scale product validation, and market replication. Organisational innovation activities¹⁸⁻¹⁹ could also be included.

Section 1, RIA, IA actions will encompass topics under the three thematic areas (water management (quality and quantity), farming system and food value chain) with a focus on the sectoral interdependencies among them (Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus).

In addition, for the second consecutive year, a financial contribution in Prizes, the “WEFE Nexus Award”, is included in this Annual Work Plan.

As referred to in Section [5.1.4](#) of this document, PRIMA Prizes are financial contributions meant to recognise the outstanding work of research teams having devised and demonstrated the successful implementation of combined management practices of water, energy, food and ecosystem (WEFE) resources in the Mediterranean.

According to this Annual Work Plan (AWP2023), PRIMA-IS will launch four calls in Section 1 for each thematic area, including the Nexus theme call. The four calls consist of three Innovation Actions (IAs) and one Research and Innovation Action (RIA), as referred to in Section [5.1.4](#) of this document.

Those calls will mobilise the Euro-Mediterranean scientific communities, stakeholders and private entities submitting proposals expected to produce a positive socio-economic impact in the Mediterranean area.

¹⁷ http://prima-med.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/h2020_mga_prima_multi_en.pdf

¹⁸ Definition of organisational innovation: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2006:323:0001:0026:EN:PDF>.

¹⁹ Organisational innovation means the implementation of a new organisational method in the undertaking's business practices, workplace organisation or external relations.

Participation of private entities (in their diversity, e.g., companies/enterprises, SMEs, start-ups, non-profit organisations, NGOs...) will be encouraged in the research consortia, jointly with public research organisations, universities and end-users.

Participants in these calls will have to submit a proposal to the PRIMA-IS that will be evaluated by peer review.

The PRIMA-IS will check proposals according to the eligibility conditions in Section 5.1.3 of this document.

The Evaluation and selection of proposals and the monitoring of the projects will be made according to H2020 rules as referred to in Section [5.1.7](#) (Section 1) of this document.

Successful projects will be funded directly by the PRIMA-IS through the signature of grant agreements between the selected consortia and the PRIMA-IS. The grant agreements will be based on the PRIMA Model Grant Agreement (PRIMA MGA), based on the Horizon 2020 Model Grant Agreement.

1.2.1 Section 1, Topics

1 Thematic Area 1-Water management:

Topic 1.1.1-2023 (IA) Integrated adaptive wastewater management plans in the Mediterranean region.

2 Thematic Area 2-Farming systems:

Topic 1.2.1-2023 (IA) Actions to restore and return degraded lands in the Mediterranean region into productive agroecosystems.

3 Thematic Area 3-Food value chain:


Topic 1.3.1-2023 (RIA) Increasing agri-food supply chain (cereal) resilience in the MENA region.

4 WEF E Nexus theme

Topic 1.4.1-2023 (IA) Accelerate adaptation and mitigation to climate change in the Mediterranean region by deploying WEF E nexus solutions.

Thematic Area water management

Topic 1.1.1 (IA) Integrated adaptive wastewater management plans in the Mediterranean region.

	
Alignment with SRIA	Thematic area 1 Water management 1.2 Sustainable, integrated water management
Alignment with EU Policies	EU Green Deal: Preserving our environment: Protecting our biodiversity and ecosystems, Zero pollution Action Plan Water Framework Directive Biodiversity Strategy

Challenge

Along with agricultural sources (e.g., chemical fertilisers and livestock manure), wastewater discharges from urban areas and industries remain an important source of pollutants in the Mediterranean region. Additionally, urban runoff, stormwater overflows, and discharges of untreated waters from small-scale agglomerations and individual systems are increasingly important sources of nutrients, heavy metals, micro-pollutants and micro-plastics. As a result of population growth in Mediterranean coastal areas, pollutant loads from wastewater treatment facilities and from runoff from urban and farming areas to sensitive ecosystems are also projected to increase. Due to pharmaceuticals, personal care products and microplastics not being degraded in the treatment plants, wastewater effluents still show residual toxicity for aquatic ecosystems and potentially threaten human health. Excess nutrient losses to inland and coastal waterways lead to eutrophication through oxygen depletion and algal blooms, destroying aquatic life and reducing biodiversity in affected areas. All this will impact the capacity of inland and coastal ecosystems to provide services such as tourism, aquaculture and fisheries, which are of utmost importance for people's livelihood. At the same time, the generated load of pollutants has significant consequences for the economy by increasing water purification costs for municipal and industrial uses. Integrated adaptive management plans of wastewater need to be established, including a combination of measures targeting substances at source, promoting new circular economy business models to improve resource recovery and water reuse, incentivising the development of improved technologies, and aligning governance systems to changing climate and evolving societal ambitions.

Scope

Proposals submitted to this call are expected to develop wastewater treatment and reuse approaches in connection with nutrient and energy recovery and cost-effective design solutions for managing and minimising micro-pollutants. This is an area with a strong policy emphasis potentially contributing to solving multiple problems at once: nutrient pollution and eutrophication, increasing prices of fertilisers and lack of access to/depletion of raw phosphates, water scarcity and depletion of water resources in the Mediterranean, water pollution including contaminants of emerging concern with public health implications. Some of the past and ongoing projects in this domain have the potential to offer a part of the solution. Yet, to arrive at effective recycling of nutrients and wastewater reuse without further spreading pollution, we also need to solve the microplastic pollution in wastewater and pollution from pharmaceutical products and other contaminants that are not removed from wastewater currently. A project that would holistically look at these issues and integrate existing solutions (both green, for instance, nature-based solutions and grey) would contribute to the challenges faced by countries in the Mediterranean region.

Topics to consider include:

- Demonstrate the feasibility and limits of circular nutrient management by recovering and recycling nutrients from (agricultural, urban, and industrial) wastewater and sewage sludge to prevent them from entering aquatic environments and lower the need for traditional fossil-based fertilisers
- Upgrade of wastewater treatment plants to better trap micro-pollutants and micro-plastics and improve conditions for increasing water reuse and better management of sewage sludge
- Optimise the energy consumption of the sector and encourage the uptake of energy efficiency technologies leading to energy savings and reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Strengthen the uptake of digital solutions for permanent tracking of potential pollutants at the inlet and outlet of the wastewater facilities
- Plan a surveillance system for COVID-19 in large wastewater treatment plants as a rapid and reliable source of information on the spread of current and future variants of the virus and other emerging pathogens
- Involve national, regional and local authorities, industry, farmers and consumers in the analysis of governance options and costs of improved access to sanitation in Mediterranean countries

Proposals should perform these tasks using a business model that guarantees the functioning of the network and its services beyond the lifespan of the project.

Proposals should set a clear plan on how they will collaborate with other projects selected under this and any other relevant topic by participating in joint and common communication and dissemination activities.

In particular, projects are expected to build links with the EU Mission “Restore our ocean and waters by 2030”, and in particular with the Mission lighthouse in the Mediterranean Sea basin, which focuses on piloting solutions for the prevention and elimination of pollution, including nutrient pollution (in particular the coordination and support actions under the Horizon Europe topic HORIZON-MISS-2021-OCEAN-03-02) and with the Mission

Implementation Support Platform for monitoring and networking activities. The projects are expected to contribute to the EU Mission “Restore our ocean and waters by 2030” Water knowledge system.

Due to the specific challenge of this topic, and in line with our principles of allowing maximum participation from Southern Mediterranean Countries to foster both North-South and South-South cooperation, the following additional eligibility criteria apply: “In addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the standard eligibility conditions (section 5.1.3), consortia must include at least one independent legal entity established in any of the MPCs²⁰. The places of the establishment of the legal entities must cover at least two different specific regions in the MPCs.

Expected impacts

- Creation of new market opportunities for recovered or recycled nutrients;
- Improvement of the energy efficiency of the wastewater treatment sector to move towards carbon and energy neutrality
- Reduction of the eutrophication of Mediterranean coastal and inland water bodies and protection and restoration of affected ecosystems (incl. ecosystem services provision).
- Increased awareness and changes in practices and behaviours of urban and agricultural communities and industries towards more sustainable ones can contribute to preventing and reducing nutrient pollution.

Key Performance Indicators

- Contribution of recycled nutrients to the overall nutrients used for agricultural production (%)
- Decrease in inputs of nutrients into soils and aquatic environments (%)
- SDG #6 Indicator 6.3.2 "Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality."
-

Contributions to EU policies, HE Mission and Partnerships

The proposal should indicate linkages to relevant EU policies and objectives in the context of the European Green Deal and relevant [EU Missions and Partnerships](#). In particular with the EU Mission [Restore our ocean and waters by 2030](#)

Contribution to SDGs

The proposals should indicate their contribution to relevant SDGs and methodology to contribute to reporting SDG indicators.


²⁰ Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) are considered the Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey and the Third Countries (TC) having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco

Table 1. Supporting information for Section 1 call for Proposals, Topic 1.1.1

Type of action	Innovation Action (IA)
The total indicative amount allocated to this call	EUR 8.2 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)	TRL 6-8 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 EUR 4.1 million and with a duration of 36 months would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submitting and selecting proposals requesting other amounts or duration.
Eligibility conditions for participation	Please refer to section 5.1.1 for the List of countries eligible for funding. Due to the specific challenge of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the standard eligibility conditions (section 5.1.3), consortia must include at least an additional legal entity established in Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) ²¹ as defined in section 5.1.1. The places of the establishment of the legal entities must cover at least two different specific regions in the MPCs.
Submission and evaluation procedure	The call will be organised according to a two-stage submission process. 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 submitting and evaluating applications can be found in Table 6 .
Evaluation rules	The award criteria, scoring, thresholds and weightings for IAs listed in part 5.1.7 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 must conclude a consortium agreement before the PRIMA grant agreement's signature.

²¹ Mediterranean Partner Countries as defined in section 5.1.1 include the following Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey. And the following Third Countries not associated with Horizon 2020 (TC), having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco.

Topic 1.2.1-2023 (IA) Actions to restore and return degraded lands in the Mediterranean region into productive agroecosystems.

	
Alignment with SRIA	Thematic Area 2 - Operational Objective 5 - Research Priority 3- Cross-Cutting: Soil sustainability
Alignment with EU policies	EU Soil Strategy for 2030 Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 EU Adaptation Strategy for climate change

Challenge

PRIMA is proposing an action aiming to galvanize sustainable solutions for land restoration and drought resilience to restore soil health in Mediterranean drylands in collaboration with the [EU Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe.'](#)

The objective of this call is very much aligned with the conclusions of the [UNCCD 15th session of the Conference of the Parties | UNCCD](#). Many areas of the Mediterranean Basin are classified as drylands²², with one-third already showing signs of desertification and likely to be more impacted in the coming years.

Desertification is accelerated and exacerbated by climate change (long drought periods), leading to the loss of vegetal cover and fertility of the soil, making these areas increasingly unsuitable for agriculture.

Desertification has significant environmental consequences in the region due to biodiversity loss and decreasing biological productivity.

In this context, most of the current varieties cannot afford and withstand the occurrence of more extreme conditions. It also has a severe socio-economic impact on the more vulnerable categories of people, such as small-holding farmers for whom agriculture is a primary source of livelihood, creating income reduction, and thus also triggering migration.

Cropland expansion and intensification of agriculture are among the drivers of land degradation processes that can lead to desertification.

Urgent action is needed to ramp up efforts to restore and return degraded lands to productive agroecosystems by adopting sustainable land management practices and genetic intervention to reverse degradation while increasing biodiversity, soil health, and food production

²² Drylands are characterized by a scarcity of water, which affects both natural and managed ecosystems and constrains the production of livestock as well as crops, wood, forage and other plants and affects the delivery of environmental services. (FAO: <https://www.fao.org/dryland-forestry/background/what-are-drylands/en/>)

Scope

The call supports the deployment of measures and practices adapted to biophysical and socio-economic conditions in the Mediterranean region to restore degraded natural resources and their ecosystem functions.

Proposals should scale up existing local knowledge and/or propose practices already tested at a research scale in the Mediterranean region to restore soil health on degraded lands capitalising on agroecological practices. The use of species, varieties and breeds, previously or de novo generated by classic and novel breeding techniques and better adapted to local climatic conditions with minimal watering/inputs and generating incomes and food for the local holders are strongly encouraged.

Proposals should be built on demonstration sites located in different Mediterranean Partner Countries²³ (land degradation hot spots) and follow a participatory method that ensures the involvement of key stakeholders.

Proposals should assess the costs and benefits of agricultural practices to restore drylands already affected by desertification by building up business models to enhance investments and create new market opportunities and social wealth.

Since an engagement at a large geographical scale and coordinated actions are needed to combat desertification in the long term, this action should prepare the ground for developing soil restoration Mediterranean lighthouses²⁴ that allow efficient exchanges of expertise and best soil and land management practices to be adopted in regions already affected by desertification. The project's proponents should use solutions against desertification from projects funded by previous PRIMA and Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe calls by developing a close partnership during the implementation of respective projects. A multi-actor approach, including all the relevant stakeholders (public and private actors), is strongly encouraged to ensure the system's sustainability even after the project's end.

Proposals should perform these tasks using a business model that guarantees the functioning of the network and its services beyond the project's lifespan.

Proposals should set a clear plan on how they will collaborate with other projects selected under this and any other relevant topic by participating in joint and common communication and dissemination activities.

Projects are expected to build links with the [EU Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe'](#).

Proposals should include dedicated tasks and appropriate resources for coordination measures and joint activities with relevant projects funded by the EU Mission, such as Work Programme 2023 topics HORIZON-MISS-2023-SOIL-01-04, HORIZON-MISS-2023-SOIL-01-08 and HORIZON-MISS-2023-SOIL-01-09²⁵, the latter ones promoting the creation of Living Labs and Lighthouses. Funded projects are expected to contribute to the Soil Deal Mission's project portfolio.

²³ Mediterranean Partner Countries as defined in section 5.1.1 [of ...] include the following Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey. Also included are the following Third Countries not associated with Horizon 2020 (TC), having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco.

²⁴ Lighthouses are single sites, like a farm or a park, where to showcase good practices. These are places for demonstration and peer-to-peer learning. Good practices are tested or in place and can be showed to inspire other practitioners to move towards sustainable land management. In addition, in lighthouse sites, researchers work together with land managers to ensure that research responds to concrete needs encountered in the field (https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/funding/documents/soil_mission_implementation_plan_final_for_publication.pdf)

²⁵ wp-12-missions_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf (europa.eu)

Where appropriate, PRIMA projects selected under this call should contribute to the [PRIMA WEFE Community of practice](#) through networking of selected demonstration sites, knowledge-sharing and capacity building.

Due to the specific challenge of this topic, and in line with our principles of allowing maximum participation from Southern Mediterranean Countries to foster both North-South and South-South cooperation, the following additional eligibility criteria apply: “In addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the standard eligibility conditions (section 5.1.3), consortia must include at least one independent legal entity established in any of the MPCs²⁶. The places of the establishment of the legal entities must cover at least two different specific regions in the MPCs.

Expected Impacts

- Restored desertified landscapes: improve the functionality of ecosystems and landscapes to continue providing ecosystem goods and services, and offer proven and cost-effective solutions for land restoration
- Increased biodiversity, soil health, and food production
- Decreased land degradation. Increased /stabilized the surface of lands suitable for cultivation and other related ecosystem services.
- Contribute to improving employment, especially for women and youth

Key Performance indicators

- Hectares of desertified areas restored
- Number of innovative solutions applied for land restoration
- Number of business models deployed?
- Number of stakeholders engaged

Contributions to EU policies, HE Mission and Partnerships

The proposal should indicate linkages to relevant EU policies and objectives in the context of the European Green Deal and relevant [EU Missions and Partnerships](#). In particular, the EU Mission “A soil Deal for Europe/ Specific Objective 1 “Reduce land degradation relating to desertification.”

Contribution to SDGs

The proposals should indicate their contribution to relevant SDGs and methodology to contribute to reporting SDG indicators.

²⁶ Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) are considered the Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey and the Third Countries (TC) having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco

Table 2. Supporting information for the Section 1 call for Proposals, Topic 1.2.1

Type of action	Innovation Action (IA)
The total indicative amount allocated to this call	EUR 8.2 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)	TRL 6-8 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 4.1 million and with a duration of 36 months would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submitting and selecting proposals requesting other amounts or duration.
Eligibility conditions for participation	Please refer to section 5.1.1 for the List of countries eligible for funding. Due to the specific challenge of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the standard eligibility conditions (section 5.1.3), consortia must include at least a legal entity established in Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) as defined in section 5.1.1. ²⁷ The places of the establishment of the legal entities must cover at least two different specific regions in the MPCs.
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 of 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 submitting and evaluating applications can be found in Table 6.
Evaluation rules	The award criteria, scoring, thresholds and weightings for RIAs, listed in part 5.1.7, 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 must conclude a consortium agreement before the conclusion of the PRIMA grant agreement.

²⁷ Mediterranean Partner Countries as defined in section 5.1.1 include the following Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey. And the following Third Countries not associated with Horizon 2020 (TC), having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco.

Thematic Area Food value-chain

Topic 1.3.1 (RIA) Increasing resilience of agri-food supply chain (cereal) in the MENA region.

	
Alignment with SRIA	Thematic area 2, Operational Objective 4 (Smart and Sustainable Farming), Thematic area 3, Operational Objective 8 (New Agri-Food Business Models) Research priorities 3 To integrate small producers into formal supply channels and improve supply chain management to better link agricultural producers to urban markets and reduce post-harvest losses while increasing the adoption of technological, organisational and cultural innovations, as well as new strategies and business models, with the final goal of enhancing their competitiveness and their contribution to Mediterranean food security
Alignment with EU policies	Farm to Fork Strategy Biodiversity Strategy

Challenge

Today, more than ever, the Mediterranean region is facing unprecedented and interdependent environmental, economic and social challenges that affect food security, health, nutrition, sustainability, and thus, the livelihoods of all people across the Mediterranean region. High population growth rates drive increased food demand in a region already heavily distressed by climate change with low internal food production capacities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed unprecedented stress on food supply chains. As its impacts are still unfolding, some new disruptions may emerge. In the meantime, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has further underlined the fragility of global supply chains and the importance of agricultural self-sufficiency.

The MENA region comprises some of the world's most significant cereals and other primary foodstuffs importers. Many countries in the region import over 30 per cent of their wheat import needs²⁸ from Russia and Ukraine, making them particularly vulnerable to the effects of international food price volatility. Actions are needed to help the Mediterranean food systems become fairer and more resilient – an absolute necessity in overcoming looming threats of climate change, water scarcity, and economic and political conflicts.

According to the FAO publication on "[The State of Food and Agriculture 2021 \(SOFA\)](#)" and policy recommendations on the [Impact of the Ukraine-Russia conflict on global food security and related matter](#), diversity in food sources (domestic production, imports or existing stocks), is a crucial aspect to ensure absorptive capacity in confronting

²⁸ FAO Report "The Importance of Ukraine and the Russian Federation For Global Agricultural Markets and the risks associated with the war in Ukraine", 10 June 2022 (<https://www.fao.org/3/cb9013en/cb9013en.pdf>)

unforeseen shocks. Diversifying agricultural production on farms and within whole regional agricultural landscapes offers adaptation and buffer capacity and makes the agroecosystem more resilient to external stressors.

Scope

This call aims to guide evidence-based recommendations for strategies, action plans, best practices and solutions to enhance the Mediterranean food supply chain's resilience (mainly cereal) to external stressors such as climate shocks and economic and political crises. Under this general challenge, applicants would build on available assessments of current vulnerabilities and market risks from external factors and stressors influencing Mediterranean food systems (biological hazards, extreme weather events, land degradation, economic crises and political conflicts) to generate tailored strategies, roadmaps, and evidence-based recommendations helping to mitigate the adverse effects of these stressors and guide the design and development of recovery efforts that can accelerate progress towards resilient Mediterranean societies.

These recommendations should include concrete solutions (including digital ones) to effectively tackle the causes of food market shocks and food insecurity in the different contexts of the Mediterranean area (and preferably in Southern Mediterranean Countries in times of crisis). Solutions should not be limited to local alternatives to previously imported products but also to boosting agricultural production through integrated cross-cutting approaches to boost agricultural production systems with agroecological practices, better-adapted species, benefiting small-scale farming families, limiting food losses, increasing nutritional security and stabilising prices.

Where it is impossible to replace the import of goods, solutions could be proposed to keep the trade relations within the Mediterranean region, depending less on outside sources. The use of ICT and digital data technology, should be implemented to improve access to information and facilitate the sharing, processing, and analysis of data to create opportunities in agriculture and address these pressing challenges being faced.

When proposing solutions, it is crucial also to consider the environmental aspect and consumer habits and trends. Work should benefit both, the conventional and organic farming sectors. The multisector approach should ensure active involvement and dialogue between relevant stakeholders, producers, smallholders, end-users, and policymakers. Dissemination, networking, training activities and tools should be utilized.

Due to the specific challenge of this topic, and in line with our principles of allowing maximum participation from Southern Mediterranean Countries to foster both North-South and South-South cooperation, the following additional eligibility criteria apply: "In addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the standard eligibility conditions (section 5.1.3), consortia must include at least one independent legal entity established in any of the MPCs²⁹. The places of the establishment of the legal entities must cover at least two different specific regions in the MPCs.

Expected impact

²⁹ Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) are considered the Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey and the Third Countries (TC) having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco

- A better understanding of the short and long-term drivers of change that may affect food systems, and in particular, the cereal supply chain in the MENA region and put food security at risk,
- Better understanding the vulnerabilities, dependencies and critical infrastructures of the food systems, and in particular, the cereals supply chain to improve the cereals supply chain in the MENA countries
- Improved preparedness to deal with risks that may threaten the cereals supply chain by making use of available data and platforms (including weather, climate, biodiversity land/soil degradation, socio-economic, and markets data)
- Streamline local food environments
- Diversification of food sourcing also exploiting digital solutions
- Risk assessment and strategies for a resilient cereal market
- Develop innovative solutions and evidence-based recommendations for strategies, action plans and best practices that policymakers, businesses and food systems can use to enhance the resilience of the food systems and ensure food security.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of identified drivers of change affecting the cereals supply chain
- Number of strategies and action plans prepared to ensure appropriate cereals supply during unforeseen crises with the local governments in the MENA region
- Number of solutions aiming to diversify food
- Number of training workshops/public events on the markets conducted to streamline local food environments
- Number of solutions aiming to improve the supply chain of cereals

Contributions to EU Policies and HE Mission and Partnerships

The proposal should indicate linkages to relevant EU policies and objectives in the context of the European Green Deal and relevant [EU Missions and Partnerships](#).

Contribution to SDGs

The proposals should indicate their contribution to relevant SDGs and methodology to contribute to reporting SDG indicators.


Table 3 Supporting information for Section 1 call for Proposals, Topic 1.3.1

Type of action	Research and Innovation Action (RIA)
Total indicative amount allocated to this call	EUR 8.2 million
Funding level	According to Horizon 2020 Rules 100%
Technology Readiness levels (TRL)	TRL 3-5 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 EUR 2,75 million and 36 months would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submitting and the selection of proposals requesting other amounts or duration.
Eligibility conditions for participation	Please refer to section 5.1.1 for the list of countries eligible for funding. Due to the specific challenge of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the standard eligibility conditions (section 5.1.3), consortia must include at least a legal entity established in Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) ³⁰ as defined in section 5.1.1. The places of the establishment of the legal entities must cover at least two different specific regions in the MPCs
Submission and evaluation procedure	The call will be organised according to a two-stage submission process. A first-stage proposal (maximum ten pages) must be submitted within the first-stage submission deadline for the first step. Successful applicants in the first step will be invited to the second step to submit a full proposal (maximum 50 pages). A timeline for submitting and evaluating applications can be found in Table 6.
Evaluation rules	The award criteria, scoring, thresholds and weightings for IAs, listed in part 5.1.7, 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 must conclude a consortium agreement before the conclusion of the PRIMA grant agreement.

³⁰ Mediterranean Partner Countries as defined in section 5.1.1 include the following Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey. And the following Third Countries not associated with Horizon 2020 (TC), having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco.

Nexus theme

Topic 1.4.1-2023 (IA) Accelerate adaptation and mitigation to climate change in the Mediterranean region by deploying WEFE nexus solutions.

	Nexus theme
Alignment SRIA priorities	<p>Priority 1.2 Water sustainability in the Mediterranean region should be ensured through improved technical tools coupled with socio-economic tools and governance, organisational and/or business models to define water-use limits in certain key areas under present and future global change scenarios.</p> <p>Priority 1.4 Use of alternative water resources</p> <p>Priority 2.2 Developing sustainable and productive agro-ecosystems</p> <p>OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2/LAND AND WATER SUSTAINABILITY - 4/ SMART AND SUSTAINABLE FARMING
Alignment with EU strategies	<p>European Green Deal,</p> <p>Water Framework Directive (WFD)</p> <p>Circular Economy Action Plan</p>

Challenge

Climate change-associated extreme events, such as droughts and flooding, are considered one of the main challenges Mediterranean countries face. Temperature is expected to continue rising, and rainfall patterns are projected to continue changing, thus increasing risks and vulnerability in a region with limited adaptive capacity. By 2050, the demand for water and food is projected to increase by over 50%, while global energy demand will have nearly doubled, leading to competing needs for the already depleted and degraded scarce resources.

These challenges could affect food security, nutrition and livelihoods, triggering migration. Regarding economic development, climate change is a wicked problem because it is complex and straddles various sectors and levels.

In this context, cross-sectoral management of water, energy, food and ecosystem resources is pivotal to a successful transition to a green economy and sustainable development. Addressing interdependencies is indeed considered essential to achieving the ambitions of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the post-2020 biodiversity framework. However, although interest in adaptation to climate change impacts has surged in recent years, the focus has largely remained sectoral, an approach that, if not correctly undertaken, can exacerbate the existing challenges. Therefore, there is a need to shift from vertical to cross-sectoral approaches that promote circularity in resource management, use, and development. Regarded as a transformative approach, the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus has the potential to address competing demands and facilitate adaptation and development in an integrated manner.

Such potential has not yet been fully recognized, as current climate adaptation strategies, including the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), have mainly promoted sectoral goals. They generally focus on sectoral and project-based activities without adequate consideration or

coordination of cross-sectoral interactions among key climate-sensitive sectors, including water, energy, food and ecosystems.

Sectoral adaptation strategies can undermine net resilience by decreasing capacity or increasing risks in another place or sector, resulting in maladaptation. There is a risk that the benefits of cross-sectoral synergies remain unexplored, especially when seeking to speed-up climate adaptation and mitigation actions. This call aims at filling this gap in the Mediterranean region.

Scope

The call supports the Nexus cross-sectoral concept as a tool in climate adaptation and mitigation strategies by designing and integrating Nexus solutions into existing climate change adaptation plans at the sectoral level and assessing their impact on the livelihoods of populations and the socio-economic performance in the Mediterranean region. Through a multi-actor approach, project proposals should be built at various demonstration sites, preferably located in Mediterranean Partner Countries³¹ characterized by diverse climate and agro-ecological and socio-economic conditions with a critical mass of stakeholders, e.g., policymakers, public authorities, farmers, and other end users. Projects should co-deploy WEFE Nexus-based adaptation solutions, including changes in production and management practices (for instance, adapted varieties, mixed cropping systems, agroecological practices, nature-based measures, and renewable energy. Technologies and processes could also be implemented and validated at the demonstration sites, including decision support systems and digital solutions. Proposals should assess the impact of Nexus-based adaptation and mitigation solutions on improving resource efficiency across the Nexus sectors and take a broad perspective by considering the impact on the overall environment and societal well-being. Consortia are expected to develop conceptual and evaluative tools for assessing tipping points beyond which climate change impacts on water, energy and food demand could harm the ecosystem integrity and the socio-economic security in the Mediterranean region. Conditions and opportunities for effective engagement of the private sector should be analyzed, and the ways to promote sustainable market solutions should be demonstrated. To this end, proposals should develop business models targeting the Nexus-based adaptation and mitigation solutions, facilitating the roll-out of the piloted innovation at a larger scale across the Mediterranean region. Ultimately, proposals are invited to offer promising pilots for successfully integrating adaptation and mitigation solutions into cross-sectoral policies. This would enable feedback to decision-makers to revise sectoral adaptation strategies, ensuring a long-lasting adaptation capacity for potentially vulnerable populations.

The objective is to enlarge the PRIMA portfolio of WEFE Nexus projects and case studies. The project proponents should use lessons learned from the Nexus projects funded by PRIMA by developing a close partnership during the implementation of respective projects. The successful consortia are strongly encouraged to participate in the **Mediterranean WEFE Nexus Community of Practice** created as an outcome of the [WEFE Science Advances Conference](#) to stimulate cross-organization collaboration and knowledge sharing in the Mediterranean region.

³¹ Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) are considered the Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey and the Third Countries (TC) having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco

Due to the specific challenge of this topic, and in line with our principles of allowing maximum participation from Southern Mediterranean Countries to foster both North-South and South-South cooperation, the following additional eligibility criteria apply: *“In addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the standard eligibility conditions (section 5.1.3), consortia must include at least one independent legal entity established in any of the MPCs³². The places of the establishment of the legal entities must cover at least two different specific regions in the MPCs.*

Expected Impacts

- Integrate the Nexus perspective into climate adaptation plans and the adaptation perspective into development plans for better policy integration
- Promote sustainable and inclusive economic development, job creation, and improving the livelihoods of people
- Increase the resilience of marginalised communities
- Strengthen policy integration between Nexus and adaptation mechanisms across sectors at different scales and among the principal actors
- Reduction of poverty, migration and vulnerability of marginalised populations.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of Nexus-based adaptation and mitigation solutions able to minimize shock, risks, and vulnerability and address impacts and risks associated with climate change
- Number of engaged stakeholders and end-users
- Number of business models of Nexus-based adaptation and mitigation solutions developed

Contribution to EU Policies, HE Mission and partnerships

The proposal should indicate linkages to relevant EU policies and objectives in the context of the European Green Deal, [Water Framework Directive \(WFD\)](#) and relevant [EU Missions and Partnerships](#)

Contribution to SDGs

The proposals should indicate their contribution to relevant SDGs and methodology to contribute to reporting SDG indicators.

³² Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) are considered the Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey and the Third Countries (TC) having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco

Table 4. Supporting information for Section 1 call for Proposals, Topic 1.4.1

Type of action	Innovation Action (IA)
Total indicative amount allocated to this call	8.2 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)	TRL 6-8 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 EUR 4.1 million and with a duration of 36 months would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submitting and selecting proposals requesting other amounts or duration.
Eligibility conditions for participation	Please refer to section 5.1.1 for the List of countries eligible for funding. Due to the specific challenge of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the standard eligibility conditions (section 5.1.3), consortia must include at least a legal entity established in Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) ³³ as defined in section 5.1.1. The places of the establishment of the legal entities must cover at least two different specific regions in the MPCs.
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 submitting and evaluating applications can be found in Table 6 .
Evaluation rules	The award criteria, scoring, thresholds and weightings for IAs listed in part 5.1.7 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.

³³ Mediterranean Partner Countries as defined in section 5.1.1 include the following Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey. And the following Third Countries not associated with Horizon 2020 (TC), having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco.

Table 5. Timetable for Section 1 Calls for Proposals in 2023

THEMATIC AREA	CALL TOPICS	Call publication and opening	Submission deadline Stage 1	Evaluation results Stage 1	Submission deadline Stage 2	Evaluation results Stage 2
Water management	Topic 1.1.1 (IA)	25/01/2023	22/03/2023	16/06/2023	06/09/2023	20/11/2023
Farming systems	Topic 1.2.1 (IA)	25/01/2023	22/03/2023	16/06/2023	06/09/2023	20/11/2023
Agri-food chain	Topic 1.3.1 (RIA)	25/01/2023	22/03/2023	16/06/2023	06/09/2023	20/11/2023
WEFE NEXUS theme	Topic 1.4.1 (IA)	25/01/2023	22/03/2023	16/06/2023	06/09/2023	20/11/2023

The PRIMA-IS will do the eligibility check after each deadline for submission and before the evaluation.

The Director of PRIMA-IS may decide to publish and open the call up to two weeks prior or one month after the envisaged date(s).

The Director of PRIMA-IS may delay other deadlines by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17:00 CET (Central European Time).

1.2 Activities supporting programme operations funded (EU contribution) and implemented by the PRIMA-IS

PRIMA-IS implements activities to evaluate the submitted proposals in response to Section 1 Calls and monitoring of the funded projects.

Detailed supporting information about the evaluation, selection and granting process, suitable types of grant agreements and funding levels are summarised under each call topic, and described in more detail in the General Annexes ([5.1: Section 1](#)).

1.2.1 Evaluation and monitoring of project proposals submitted to Section 1 and Section 2 calls.

Objective: This activity consists of implementing the evaluation of all the eligible projects submitted to the 2023 PRIMA calls (Section 1 and Section 2) and preparing the Board of Trustees' decision.

The evaluation process is described in detail in section [5.1.7](#).

In AWP 2023, Section 1 and Section 2 calls will be organised as a **two-stage submission process**.

PRIMA-IS will assign independent experts to evaluate first-stage and full proposals.

PRIMA-IS will provide guidelines to the experts for the remote evaluation and drafting of their assessment report. At the end of this period of individual assessment, the experts will meet in a panel to prepare the consensus report for each proposal. When a consensus is reached for each proposal, the panel will agree on the final assessment and proceed with its ranking.

After the remote evaluation of proposals, a two-day meeting will be organised to draft the consensus report and establish the ranking list.

PRIMA-IS will cover the independent expert fees, travel and accommodation and other meetings-related expenses following international standards. The consensus meeting can also be held remotely.

PRIMA-IS will also cover the board of Trustees meeting at the end of the evaluation process to decide on projects to be funded based on the ranking list, as set in Article 6 point 2 (q) PRIMA Statutes³⁴.

Moreover, PRIMA-IS will also cover the costs related to monitoring the PRIMA projects, particularly the technical and financial reporting.

A meeting will be organised to provide guidelines to the Project's consortia about the commencement, management, finance and monitoring of Section 1 and Section 2 funded projects. This meeting will be key for identifying synergies or eventually overlapping themes to reflect the projects' impacts and identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness of their results.

Type of activity: Expert's contracts.

Indicative budget: EUR 500 000

³⁴ PRIMA Statutes Article 6 point 2 (q), page 4.

1.2.2 PRIMA WEFE NEXUS Award

Objective: Awards have a strong potential to drive innovation by recognising achievements and promoting role models.

In this regard, PRIMA plans to award a monetary recognition prize dedicated to promoting scientific research and demonstrating the economic and social benefits of the Water Energy Food and Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus in the Mediterranean Area: the **PRIMA WEFE Nexus Award**.

The PRIMA WEFE Nexus Award is assigned to “research teams and practitioners” that have devised and demonstrated the successful implementation of combined management practices of water, energy, food and ecosystem resources at the local or regional scale in the Mediterranean area.

The award enables teams to showcase their best practices and achievements. This will encourage researchers to use and manage their results in the best way possible.

Winners of this contest should contribute to the [PRIMA WEFE Community of practice](#) by sharing their experiences and best practices.

PRIMA will award two winners with a recognition prize of 10 000 EUR each.

The PRIMA Nexus Award will provide the winner of each of the two Prizes with high visibility in the public interest and increased media coverage.

The contest’s specific rules³⁵ will be published on the PRIMA website as soon as the PRIMA 2023 calls are public and actively disseminated elsewhere to maximise participation.

Contestants will have to provide proof of eligibility according to the award rules of the contest adopted by the Director of PRIMA-IS (see [Section 5.1.5](#) for Model Rules of Contest PRIMA Prizes).

Amount of prize:

Prize Amount(s): two awards of EUR 10 000 each

Budget of the prizes: EUR 20 000

Eligibility criteria:

The contestants for the PRIMA prizes should be at least one legal entity established in a PRIMA PS.³⁶ The demonstrated practices must be implemented in the Mediterranean region.

Prizes will not be awarded to teams including employees of PRIMA or serving on one of the PRIMA advisory (Scientific Advisory Committee) or governing (Board of Trustees and Steering Committee) boards.

³⁵ The PRIMA WEFE Nexus award rules of contest will be adopted by the Director of PRIMA-IS based on Art 14 of PRIMA Statutes

³⁶ The latest information on the PRIMA PS can be found on PRIMA webpage: <http://prima-med.org>

Please also note that participants who have already received an EU or Euratom prize cannot receive a second prize for the same activities.

Award criteria: An independent panel of experts will evaluate all eligible applications. The prizes will be awarded, after the closure of the contest, to the contestant(s) who, in the opinion of the panel, best address the following criteria:

In addition to their scientific excellence, the proposed solutions should,

- demonstrate the more comprehensive socio-economic benefits of their proposed practices going beyond a fragmented system of sectors and players
- demonstrate that they have directly exploited their proposed solutions or have played an active role in the uptake of the results by third parties, in particular, influencing policy change
- demonstrate the replication and upscaling potential of the proposed Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus solutions

Type of action: Recognition prizes.

Indicative timetable: Prize contests will be launched in the first quarter of 2023 and remain open until the third quarter of 2023.

1.2.3 Organisation of the PRIMA Strategic Workshop -

The PRIMA Strategic Workshop, organised as a 2-days event, will bring together key institutional actors in the EU-MED³⁷ for open discussion on the impact, achievements and strategic direction of the PRIMA programme.

The event will foresee a comprehensive programme of high-level speakers from EU institutions and international organisations, presenting their ideas through inspiring keynote speeches and pertinent panel discussions. PRIMA projects will showcase their achievements and success stories on the second day within parallel sessions.

Bringing projects together in one venue will facilitate synergy-building, exchanging ideas, and elaborating solutions to challenges for scaling up innovative business models being developed by projects.

At these regional events, macro and micro-level organisations come together for cross-country exchanges, knowledge sharing and elaborating solutions to challenges for scaling up eco-innovative business models.

Type of action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: 3rd Quarter 2023

Indicative budget: EUR 30 000

³⁷ Regional actors and EU programmes such as Union for the Mediterranean, (UfM) Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry | ASCAME, BUSINESSMED – Union of Mediterranean Business Confederations, Interreg 'NEXT MED', DG NEAR

2 Section 2: Activities organised by PRIMA-IS and funded by the national funding bodies of PS

2.1 Activities following transnational calls organised by PRIMA-IS and funded by the PRIMA Participant States

Activities managed by PRIMA-IS and funded by PS are evaluated and selected based on the Rules for Participation of Horizon 2020 following open calls for proposals centrally managed by the PRIMA-IS according to a two-stage submission process. Such activities are funded in line with common principles (see 5.2.10).

Each applicant must comply with the national funding agency's regulations supporting the programme³⁸. (See Section 5.2, Section 2), Before submitting a proposal, the applicant should check the funding rates and eligible costs in the national regulations and contact the relevant National Contact Points (NCPs) for any doubts regarding Section 2 calls for proposals. Grant agreements will be signed between participants and relevant national funding bodies following national rules (See 5.2.11, Section 2 of this document)

PRIMA Section 2 call, funded by the PS, will be a single multi-topic call that includes R&I activities encompassing all TRL (3-7); however, funding activities with TRL (6-8) will depend on national funding regulations. If not explicitly indicated in the national regulations, the applicant should contact the relevant NCP.

PRIMA AWP2023 provides information about calls for proposals to be managed by the PRIMA-IS, including the challenge, scope and expected impacts, eligibility requirements and other conditions for applying.

Detailed supporting information about the evaluation, selection and granting process, suitable types of grant agreements and funding levels are summarised under each call topic, described in more detail in the General Annexes (5.2: Section 2) and the national funding rules.

This call will be implemented in compliance with common principles to be agreed upon by the Participating States and the European Commission, taking into account the principles set out in Decision (EU) 2017/1324], Title VIII 'Grants' of the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and the Council (the 'Financial Regulation') and Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council, in particular the principles of equal treatment, transparency, independent peer-review evaluation and selection.

Section 2 call will be launched in a two-stage submission process. PRIMA-IS will be responsible for evaluating proposals conducted with rules based on H2020 rules RfP in a peer review process with a panel that will rank the proposals.

³⁸ Algeria, General Directorate for scientific research and technological development (DGRSDT), Croatia, Ministry of Science and Education, Cyprus, Research Promotion Foundation, Research and Innovation Projects Unit, Egypt, Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (ASRT) and Science and Technological Development Fund (SDTF), France, French National Research Agency (ANR), Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) Greece, General Secretariat for Research and Technology (GSRT), Israel, Israel Innovation Authority (IIA) and Ministry of Science, Technology and Space (MOST), Italy, Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca (MUR), Jordan Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST), Lebanon, Conseil National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS-L), Luxembourg, Luxembourg National Research Fund (FNR), Malta, Malta Council for Science And Technology (MCST), Morocco, State Secretariat for Higher Education and Scientific Research, Portugal, Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), Slovenia, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Spain, Centro para el Desarrollo Tecnológico Industriales, (CDTI) and Agencia Estatal de Investigación (AEI), Tunisia, Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique (MESRS), Turkey, The Scientific And Technological Research Council Of Turkey (TUBITAK).

Admissibility and eligibility of proposals will be first checked by the PRIMA-IS according to the conditions indicated respectively in Section 5.2.2 and Section 5.2.3 of this document and then by the national funding body according to their National Regulations.

In this context, proposals that are considered eligible for participation and funding by PRIMA-IS and the national funding bodies will enter the evaluation process. However, in the event of a negative outcome of verifying eligibility for funding of any applicant consortium, PRIMA-IS may require additional information from a consortium, or the participant concerned, such as an attestation that the funds to cover their participation in the project will be available.

At the end of the evaluation, the panel will produce a single ranking list to guarantee that the highest quality projects will be funded.

If one or more projects cannot be funded (if a funding body runs out of budget), the projects following directly in the ranking may be selected. For details on the evaluation and selection process, please see sub-sections 5.2.6 and 5.2.7.

In Section 2, the beneficiaries must sign a grant agreement directly with their national funding bodies to receive the funds.

PRIMA Section 2 call will address the topics described in sub-Section 2.2 below (according to national priorities) and the cross-cutting issues among them. Research projects can address cross-cutting issues between two topics as long as they are both eligible for funding by the partner countries.

When training and mobility activities are considered eligible by the funding bodies, these actions will be encouraged, and projects should integrate into their work plan schemes for the mobility of young researchers/postgraduates/post-doctorates, following the modalities set out in national regulation funding bodies.

Depending on the research question addressed, projects should deliver tangible outputs and enhance technological and social innovation. The projects could include innovative technologies like artificial intelligence, smart digital technologies, space data, and big data analysis. When explicitly allowed by the funding bodies' national regulations, Innovation Actions should involve the private sector in the project Consortium and particularly relevant SMEs.

All participants to activities funded by the PRIMA-IS or by Participating States of the PRIMA programme are required to label or co-label any communication or publication related to their activities with the following acknowledgement "[name of the activity/grant code] is part of the PRIMA programme supported by the European Union", as well as with the PRIMA logo.

2.1.1 Topics for Section 2 calls

1 Thematic Area 1-Water management:

Topic 2.1.1-2023 (RIA*³⁹) New governance models to define best practices for sustainable water management and conflict mitigation.

2 Thematic Area 2-Farming systems:

Topic 2.2.1 (RIA⁴⁰) A step toward carbon-neutral farms: coupling renewable energy sources with circular farming systems.


3 Thematic Area 3-Food value chain:

Topic 2.3.1-2023 (RIA⁴¹) Assessing novel antimicrobial food packaging and coating materials to reduce food waste to improve safety in the Mediterranean food supply chain.

39, 28,29 Please note that the acronym RIA is used both for Section 1 and Section 2. In Section 1 the rules applying to these actions are the standard Horizon 2020 rules for participation (RfP). While the rules used in Section 2 are to some extent based on the Horizon 2020 RfP, specific rules, concerning participation and funding rates, apply. As the projects selected in Section 2 are funded directly by the national funding bodies, they will be subject to the respective national regulations. For more details regarding the rules for Section 2 please refer to the guidelines for applicants on the PRIMA website.

Thematic Area 1-Water management

Topic 2.1.1-2023 (RIA*⁴²) New governance models to define best practices for sustainable water management and conflict mitigation.

	
Alignment with SRIA	Thematic area 1 Water management 1.2 Sustainable, integrated water management
Alignment with EU policies	European Green Deal, Water Framework Directive (WFD)

Challenge

The present water stress situation in all Mediterranean countries is exacerbated by climate change, with periods of drought and flooding, as foreseen in the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, as well as by widespread unsustainable practices. This is likely to compromise further water availability and quality and, consequently, the food security of the Mediterranean countries. Indeed, major conflicts have already been observed between the different water users (agriculture, industry, tourism, households, etc.). These risks of conflicts can be accentuated, especially when countries, regions or administrative units share surface or underground water resources and no common agreement is in place for sustainable management of the shared resources. To reduce the risk of conflicts that could further destabilise the political situation in the region and the well-being of Mediterranean societies, it is necessary to create new governance models based on solid data and resulting, in the medium and long term, in improved agreements for the sustainable management of water resources under conditions of climate change, by establishing a solid process involving all relevant stakeholders at the local, national or transboundary levels, according to the case.

Scope

Projects funded under this call should contribute to water sustainability and security in the Mediterranean region through the following activities:

- Bring together a variety of stakeholders in water governance experiments to demonstrate how collaborative administrations, networking of non-state actors, use of innovative technologies (including GIS and remote sensing) to optimise water use and avoid its depletion, and shared creation of knowledgeable action can be mutually beneficial by changing the dynamics of water demand and supply. To this end, partners with expertise in social and economic sciences, as well as in multi-stakeholder

⁴² Please note that the acronym RIA is used both for Section 1 and Section 2. In Section 1 the rules applying to these actions are the standard Horizon 2020 rules for participation (RfP). While the rules used in Section 2 are to some extent based on the Horizon 2020 RfP, specific rules, concerning participation and funding rates, apply. As the projects selected in Section 2 are funded directly by the national funding bodies, they will be subject to the respective national regulations. For more details regarding the rules for Section 2 please refer to the guidelines for applicants on the PRIMA *website*.

communication strategies/models and participatory decision-making processes, are strongly recommended.

- Map the use of available water resources, establish methodologies based on monitoring, modelling and technical solutions to address information gaps, better plan response to climate-induced risks (e.g., flooding, storms and droughts), limit withdrawals, optimise water storage and preserve groundwater and surface water quality and quantity in a circular economy context.
- Examine governance solutions, analyse water tariff systems and prices for the provision of water services (supply, treatment, etc.) in a context characterised by climate change, identify any inefficiencies and the consequent impact on the environment and water security, and propose alternative models and economic instruments (e.g., true cost approach) that encompass the concepts of affordability, cost recovery, willingness to pay.
- Review existing legal frameworks and agreements (which can be either transboundary, national, regional or local) and propose measures to ensure that they guarantee fair and sustainable access to and allocation of water resources while preserving them, better balance conflicting interests and minimise opportunities for future conflict, enhance all stakeholders' participation.

Results from projects funded under this call for proposals should apply to countries facing similar challenges and conflicts, even if these do not share a common physical border. The identification, sharing and scale-up of good practices already existing in the region that can lead to the desired expected impacts are also encouraged.

Where appropriate, PRIMA projects selected under this call should contribute to the [PRIMA WEFE Community of practice](#) through networking of selected demonstration sites, knowledge-sharing and capacity building.

Due to the specific challenge of this topic, and in line with our principles of allowing maximum participation from Southern Mediterranean Countries to foster both North-South and South-South cooperation, the following additional eligibility criteria apply: *"In addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the standard eligibility conditions (section 5.1.3), consortia must include at least one independent legal entity established in any of the MPCs⁴³*. The places of the establishment of the legal entities must cover at least two different specific regions in the MPCs.

Expected impacts

- Mitigation and prevention of current and future water conflicts under climate change conditions through developing the necessary governance solutions and fair allocation of water resources to different users through limits in water use;
- Elaboration of participation and governance models resulted in improved coordination of water users and stakeholders at the basin level and, in the case of transboundary waters, adopting multilateral management agreements for strengthened cooperation among countries;
- Increased water security and strengthened protection of depleted water bodies (quality and quantity) and water-related ecosystems, stemming from adopting

⁴³ Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) are considered the Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey and the Third Countries (TC) having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco

innovative technical solutions with appropriate legal, economic and governance instruments.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of newly developed water rights systems ensuring the right allocations for water users

Contributions to EU Policies, HE Mission and Partnerships

The proposal should indicate their contribution to relevant EU policies and objectives in the context of the European Green Deal, Water Framework Directive (WFD), and relevant EU Missions and Partnerships.


Contributions to SDGs

The proposal should indicate their contribution to relevant SDGs and methodology to contribute to reporting SDG indicators.

Preliminary version

Thematic Area 2-Farming systems:

Topic 2.2.1 (RIA) A step toward carbon-neutral farms: coupling renewable energy sources with circular farming systems.

	
Alignment with SRIA	Thematic Area 2 - Operational Objective 4 - Research Priority 2 - Cross-Cutting: Digital Technologies
Alignment with EU policies	European Green Deal EU 2030 Energy Strategy Circular Economy Action Plan Water Reuse Regulation Methane Strategy

Challenge

Agriculture is key to sustainable food systems while contributing to achieving climate neutrality's European Green Deal ambition by 2050. Greenhouse gas reduction and adaptation to climate change are significant challenges that European agriculture will face over the coming years.

Non-sustainable agriculture practices in the Mediterranean countries result in an increase in water and inputs used for irrigation and fertilisation, which in turn also increase the cost of production and reduce the income of small farmers, increase greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions and harm the adaptative capacity of the agro-ecosystems to face and alleviate climate change impacts.

By adopting more sustainable practices (agroecology, agroforestry, mixed farming systems, new manure management/ nitrogen fertilisation practices), agriculture has the power to decrease GHG emissions and increase carbon storage that could be optimized through a new approach to "greening agriculture". Moreover, the Mediterranean farming systems, aligned with the [Water Reuse Regulation](#) and [Circular Economy Action Plan](#), need to optimize external resources by favouring circular systems facilitating the recovery and subsequent reuse of the main inputs into their production systems and along the value chains. This shift from linearity to circularity in the Mediterranean region is a transition facing gaps in innovation and practices that this call intends to bridge.

In addition to the steadily and fast-growing water scarcity and land degradation in the Mediterranean region, energy and nutrients that are the primary external inputs have seen their prices drastically increase during the last decade. This situation has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukrainian war, which have changed the world trades for critical commodities and compromised access to essential resources for our societies, such as cereals, gas, and fertilizers, leading to an extra layer of unbearable production costs for smallholders.

Integrating local renewable energy sources at the farm or regional level and sustainable agricultural practices is a promising way to reduce farmers' GHG emissions and related production costs.

Diversification of the energy sources, a modernization of the equipment's/installations (more efficient heating or cooling systems, pumping systems, isolation, use of precision agriculture) and an increase in the use of renewable energies is already in place on some farms. Yet, there is a growing trend to keep the role of renewables regenerative and not an extractive asset/resource.

However, access to these alternatives/technologies or the costs associated with farm implementation is often an obstacle for the farmers, especially for the Mediterranean smallholders.

Accordingly, affordable and sustainable production-consumption systems need to be developed and scaled up in the Mediterranean region to stabilise the farmers' profitability and attract a new generation of young farmers making use of the digital transformation opportunities in a circular economy context.

Scope

Proposals should develop an integrated farming system using renewable energy to decrease GHG emissions and maximize the use and reuse of wastes and inputs. (For instance, and not limited to reusing treated wastewater and sewage sludge). The proposals are seeking innovative, actionable and affordable systems in open fields or protected farming systems such as greenhouses, aeroponic, hydroponic, aquaponic and cascade systems, or any other systems that can minimize the costly use of external inputs while optimizing the resource use.

In open fields, proposed systems must be based on eco-friendly practices that enhance an integrated utilization of farm waste or agro-food by-products (manure management practices, on-farm bio-waste refineries) for fertilization and/or energy production according to circular bio-economy principles. Under greenhouse conditions, improving the passive accumulation of heat and carbon dioxide enrichment should be considered. Closed soilless farming systems—hydroponics, aquaponics and vertical farming can significantly help ensure sustainability in this competitive sector.

In the case of producing energy using waste, the proposal should ensure that this is not done at the cost of organic fertilization nor has a negative impact on the practices favouring soil carbon / organic matter storage.

The novel agronomic developments should be coupled with solar, geothermal, wind, biomass/wastes, or any renewable energy to ensure more carbon-neutral farming operations and limit the impact of high energy prices on smallholders. The use /integration of ICT, IoT, nano-technologies and sensors devices to estimate and follow up on the farm's energy consumption and CO₂ emissions (T equivalent) is requested.

The socioeconomic feasibility of the proposed measures should be demonstrated considering the complexity of the new integrated farming operations and the need for specific skills related to the possible simultaneous farming of diversified products and/or the use of new technologies.

Proposals should involve a critical mass of stakeholders from policymakers, public authorities, farmers, and other end-users through a multi-actor approach. The living lab can also be an enabling environment to co-develop and test the proposed solutions. The development of new business models is also encouraged, and the engagement of policymakers to scale up disseminate and replicate the solutions at a larger scale and

envisage incentives such as guarantees, concessional loans, subsidies, or other types of financial instruments to facilitate the farmers' adoption at the scale of the new solutions.

Capacity development activities should be considered to create the critical mass of competencies needed for the transition to sustainable agro-biodiversity systems within the circular economy principles. The capacity development plan should respond to the country's needs assessment for the transition.

The proposal should also consider a framework for awareness raising customized to the different actors involved in the transition with factual evidence on the gains for all stakeholders.

Due to the specific challenge of this topic, and in line with our principles of allowing maximum participation from Southern Mediterranean Countries to foster both North-South and South-South cooperation, the following additional eligibility criteria apply to this call: "In addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the standard eligibility conditions (section 5.1.3), consortia must include at least one independent legal entity established in any of the MPCs⁴⁴. The places of the establishment of the legal entities must cover at least two different specific regions in the MPCs.

Where appropriate, PRIMA projects selected under this call should contribute to the [PRIMA WEFE Community of practice](#) through networking selected demonstration sites, knowledge-sharing and capacity building. If the selected PRIMA projects work on soils (e.g. on carbon farming) they should seek coordination with relevant projects funded under the EU Mission "A Soil Deal for Europe", notably those from Work Programme 2023 promoting the creation of living labs and lighthouses.

Expected impacts

- Decrease in CO2 equivalent emissions by using alternative sources of local and renewable energy
- Improving the overall efficient use of water, fertilizers, and nutrients in Mediterranean farming systems by adopting a circular bio-economy approach
- Reduce the dependency on conventional energy suppliers
- Improve the overall land productivity by integrating different cropping systems
- Use of local energy from renewable sources
- Reducing the impacts of climate change on Mediterranean farming systems.

Key Performance Indicators

For KPIs, refer to the SRIA

- Number of sustainable practices applied
- Reduction of external use of entrants
- Number of business models
- Reduction of food costs production costs
- Reduction of GHG

⁴⁴ Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) are considered the Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey and the Third Countries (TC) having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco

Contributions to EU Policies, HE Mission and Partnerships


The proposal should indicate linkages to **relevant** EU policies and objectives in the context of the European Green Deal and relevant [EU Missions and Partnerships](#)

Contributions to SDGs

The proposals should indicate their contribution to relevant SDGs and methodology to contribute to reporting SDG indicators.

Preliminary version

Topic 2.3.1 (RIA)⁴⁵ – Assessing novel antimicrobial food packaging and coating materials to reduce food waste to improve safety in the Mediterranean food supply chain.:

	
Alignment with SRIA	Thematic area 3, Operational Objective 7 (reduce losses and waste), Research priorities 2
Alignment with EU Policies	Farm-to-Fork Strategy Waste Framework Directive EU Food 2030 R&I policy (Circularity and resource efficiency) Circular Economy Action Plan Plastics Strategy

Challenge

About 30% of the food globally produced for human consumption is estimated yearly, lost or wasted along the supply chains annually (FAO, 2021), with severe economic, social and environmental impacts. While this issue is addressed at the global level, it is even more challenging in the Mediterranean region due to the limited availability of land and water, the marginalization of some rural areas, the complexity and diversity between societies and regions in terms of food categories, food systems and technological development, and different traditional and cultural aspects influencing consumers' behaviour. Food contamination and spoilage are still the leading cause of limiting shelf-life and safety. Qualitative losses of nutrients and functional and bioactive compounds also occur along the food supply chain with inadequate facilities and poor maintenance of proper conditions. Packaging is essential to prevent food deterioration and preserve or prolong food quality and shelf-life while assuring safety.

Due to environmental burdens, biodegradable packaging materials are gaining significant importance in the face of ever-growing environmental concerns about plastic pollution. They are a sustainable, environmentally friendly, and cost-effective alternative to conventional plastic packaging materials.

Naturally, food products contain some microorganisms that can proliferate and adulterate the product depending on the preservation method. To control and minimize the microbiological hazards of foodborne pathogens and predict and enhance the shelf life of food products to fulfil consumers' quality expectations, new food packaging technologies are being developed by substituting synthetic/chemical antimicrobial agents with the microbiome-based atmosphere and by developing models and tools for predicting and controlling shelf life.

The main objective of this call is to foster the adoption of innovative biodegradable materials tailored to Mediterranean food systems, to prevent food spoilage with safer, more environmentally friendly alternatives to plastic packaging, contributing substantially to the [EU Plastics Strategy](#), the [Waste Framework Directive](#) and the [Circular Economy Action Plan](#).

⁴⁵ Please note that the acronym RIA is used both for Section 1 and Section 2. In Section 1 the rules applying to these actions are the standard Horizon 2020 rules for participation (RfP). While the rules used in Section 2 are to some extent based on the Horizon 2020 RfP, specific rules, concerning participation and funding rates, apply. As the projects selected in Section 2 are funded directly by the national funding bodies, they will be subject to the respective national regulations. For more details regarding the rules for Section 2, please refer to the guidelines for applicants on the PRIMA website.

Scope

Proposals should explore novel, cost-competitive and versatile biodegradable food packaging and coatings materials with adequate functionalities to control the packaging atmosphere and prevent food spoilage while causing no environmental damage.

Proposals should demonstrate bioplastics and/or coatings and/or bio-composites for food packaging and determine their potential environmental impact and economic feasibility compared with conventional products. Microbiome solutions could also be explored to get a more predictable and sufficient shelf life for food products in substitution for anti-microbial chemical agents.

The innovative biodegradable and microbiome-based packaging materials must be tailored for different traditional Mediterranean food categories and processing techniques and technologies (e.g. raw, cooking, fermentation, dehydration...) with better consumer safety features aligned with relevant standards.

Cost-effective and user-friendly ICT-based solutions integrated into the innovative food packaging materials can be considered to reduce waste and improve the efficiency of the food supply chains at local and regional levels by providing consumers and supply-chain actors with relevant information on storage and transportation conditions, supervising the quality of the food products.

Sound business models that benefit all actors along the value chains and maximise gains from biomass valorisation, protecting biodiversity and the environment while securing food products and food systems, would be desirable.

Proposals should establish local sustainability-oriented bio-based value chains and demonstrate their replicability in the Mediterranean region with low bio-economy activities.

Proposals should also include considerations about the safety of consumers of the targeted final application for the developed packaging solutions and validate their market acceptance.

Applications should fall under the multi-actor approach, with active engagement and communication with relevant stakeholders, end-users, and the food systems (producers, retailers, groceries, households, and chefs).

Where appropriate, PRIMA projects selected under this call should contribute to the [PRIMA WEFE Community of practice](#) through networking of selected demonstration sites, knowledge-sharing and capacity building.

Due to the specific challenge of this topic, and in line with our principles of allowing maximum participation from Southern Mediterranean Countries to foster both North-South and South-South cooperation, the following additional eligibility criteria apply: *"In addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the standard eligibility conditions (section 5.1.3), consortia must include at least one independent legal entity established in any of the MPCs⁴⁶*. The places of the establishment of the legal entities must cover at least two different specific regions in the MPCs.

⁴⁶ Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) are considered the Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey and the Third Countries (TC) having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco

Expected impacts

- Introduce new environmentally-friendly techniques to reduce food waste:
- Demonstrate the efficacy of bio-based materials for packaging to improve food safety and reduce food waste that meets market requirements.
- Reduce the need for chemical treatments by using agricultural by-products and control pathogenic bacteria while preserving food's nutritive and organoleptic properties.
- Job creation and job retention activities with equal gender opportunities.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of newly designed food products with enhanced shelf-life, quality and health-related beneficial properties
- Number of developed Innovative bio-based materials from packaging to improve food safety and reduce food waste meeting market requirements
- Number of jobs created/retained with equal gender opportunities

Contributions to EU Policies, Mission, and Partnerships

The proposal should indicate linkages to relevant EU policies and objectives in the context of the European Green Deal and relevant [EU Missions and Partnerships](#)

Contributions to SDGs

The proposals should indicate their contribution to relevant SDGs and methodology to contribute to reporting SDG indicators.

Table 6. Supporting information for Section 2 call for Proposals

Type of action	Research & Innovation Activities (RIA ⁴⁷)
The total indicative amount allocated to this call	EUR 36 332 500
Funding level	Depending on National Regulations
Budget and duration of grants	PRIMA considers that proposals requesting a contribution of at least EUR 1.5 million and with a duration of 36 months would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submitting and selecting proposals requesting other amounts or duration, following national regulations.
TRL	Proposals should clearly state the starting and end TRLs of the key technology or technologies targeted in the project.
Eligibility conditions for participation	In addition to the standard admissibility and eligibility conditions (please refer to section 5.2.2 and section 5.2.3 in this document), the following additional eligibility condition applies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the standard eligibility conditions (section 5.1.3), consortia must include at least a legal entity established in Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC)⁴⁸. The places of the establishment of the legal entities must cover at least two different specific regions in the MPCs. - As defined in section 5.1.1. each applicant must check their eligibility for participation/funding in accordance with their national funding agencies.
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 submitting and evaluating applications can be found in Table 9 below.
Grant agreement	Each national funding body will fund the beneficiaries established in its own country; thus, the national funding rules apply. Each national funding body will sign a grant agreement (or any official documents acting as a contract) with their national beneficiaries taking part in the selected project (section 5.2.11). The coordinator of the project has to decide with his/her partners of a common starting date and send this information to all the funding bodies involved in funding this project in order to ensure that the national grant agreements are synchronized in time to cover all the period of the project.
Consortium agreement	A consortium agreement mentioning the distribution of the tasks among partners (as listed in the proposal) must be concluded. Some national funding bodies may require this document before signing the grant agreements, so it is necessary to refer to the national regulations and draft the consortium agreement accordingly (section 5.2.11)

⁴⁷ Please note that the acronym RIA is used both for Section 1 and Section 2. In Section 1 the rules applying to these actions are the standard Horizon 2020 rules for participation (RIP). While the rules used in Section 2 are to some extent based on the H2020 RIP, specific rules concerning participation and funding rates apply. As the projects selected in Section 2 are funded directly by the national funding bodies, they will be subject to the respective national regulations. For more details regarding the rules for Section 2 please refer to the guidelines for applicants on the PRIMA website.

⁴⁸ Mediterranean Partner Countries as defined in section 5.1.1 include the following Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey. And the following Third Countries not associated with Horizon 2020 (TC), having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco.

*Table 7. Indicative PRIMA PS planned financial contributions for Section 2 in Annual Work Plan 2023 in EUR**

PRIMA Participating State (PS)	Funding Agency	Financial annual commitment per National Funding Agency	Financial annual commitment per PS
	Acronym	(EUR)	(EUR)
Algeria	DGRST	2.000.000	2.000.000
Croatia	MSE	500.000	500.000
Cyprus	RIF	400.000	400.000
Egypt	ASRT	1.500.000	3.650.000
	SDTF	2.150.000	
France	ANR	6.000.000	6.000.000
Germany	BMBF	2.500.000	2.500.000
Greece	GSRT	800.000	800.000
Israel	IIA/MOST	500.000	500.000
Italy	MUR	7.000.000	7.000.000
Jordan	HCST	437.500	437.500
Lebanon	CNRS-L	100.000	100.000
Luxembourg	FNR	500.000	500.000
Malta	MCST	500.000	500.000
Morocco	MESRSFC	3.400.000	3.400.000
Portugal	FCT	1.125.000	1.125.000
Slovenia	ARSS	170.000	170.000
	AEI	3.000.000	
Spain	CDTI	1.250.000	4.250.000
Tunisia	MESRS	1.500.000	1.500.000
Turkey	TUBITAK	1.300.000	1.300.000
		36.632.500	36.632.500

* Wherever relevant, local currencies have been converted into EURO using official exchange rates.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The financial contributions from PRIMA PS for AWP 2023 are provided based on a formal commitment letter signed yearly by the competent authorities of the PRIMA Funding Agencies involved.

Table 8. Timetable for Section 2 call for proposals in 2023

THEMATIC AREA	CALL TOPICS	Call publication and opening	Submission deadline Stage 1	Evaluation results Stage 1	Submission deadline Stage 2	Evaluation results Stage 2
Water management	Topic 2.1.1	25/01/2023	29/03/2023	23/06/2023	13/09/2023	11/12/2023
Farming systems	Topic 2.2.1	25/01/2023	29/03/2023	23/06/2023	13/09/2023	11/12/2023
Agri-food value chain	Topic 2.3.1	25/01/2023	29/03/2023	23/06/2023	13/09/2023	11/12/2023

The PRIMA-IS will do the admissibility and eligibility check after each deadline for submission and before the evaluation takes place, followed by an eligibility check by the national funding agencies according to their [national regulations](#).

The Director of PRIMA-IS may decide to publish and open the call up to two weeks prior or one month after the envisaged date(s).

The Director of PRIMA-IS may delay other deadlines by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 CET.

2.2 Activities supporting programme operations funded and implemented by the PRIMA-IS

This section refers to the PS's costs for managing projects resulting from the calls managed by the PRIMA and funded by the PS.

These costs must not exceed 6% of the individual financial contribution by each Participating State in Section 2. For 2023, the total amount of these contributions must not exceed EUR 2.197.950.

Preliminary version

3 Section 3 – Activities and actions organised, managed and funded by the PS

PRIMA PS implement and fund an array of national activities that contribute to the objectives of the PRIMA programme. The participation of the PS foresees two types of activities:

- Participant States Initiated Activities (PSIAs); PSIAs are funded following national calls with evaluation, selection and granting processes implemented by one or several PS in line with common principles (see 5.2.10) and must be included in the Annual Work Plan by PRIMA-IS after obtaining approval from the Commission.
- “Other Activities” supporting programme operations funded and implemented by PS. They support programme operations and constitute an integral part of the PRIMA programme.

3.1 Participating States Initiated Activities (PSIAs)

Decision (EU) 2017/1324 provides that PRIMA activities may include activities under the Participating States' national programmes, including transnational projects.

Those activities, included as so-called Participating States Initiated Activities PSIAs in the PRIMA AWP, will be implemented in compliance with common principles to be agreed upon by the Participating States and the European Commission, taking into account the principles set out in the Decision (EU) 2017/1324, in Part One of Title VIII of the Financial Regulation No (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 and Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013, in particular the principles of equal treatment, transparency, independent peer-review evaluation and selection (See [Section 5.2.10](#) of this document)

Pursuant to Article 6 (8) of the PRIMA Decision, those activities are to be provided for in the annual work plan only following the positive outcome of their external independent evaluation by international peer review with regard to the objectives of PRIMA.

The PSIAs listed in this section of AWP 2023 are aligned with PRIMA objectives according to the assessment of external international experts.

Table 9. Participating States Initiated Activities in 2023 (details of the calls are given in [Section 6](#)).

#	Code	Activity title	Keyword	Type of action	PS involved	type of budget allocation	PS indicative commitment (EUR)
1	ES.2023.1	FUNDING FOR NATIONAL PROJECTS R+D FIELDS	AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	RIA	SPAIN	ANNUAL CALLS	30 000 000
2	FR.2023.1	RESEARCH PROJECTS FUNDED BY ANR UNDER THE ANNUAL NATIONAL CALL FOR PROPOSALS	INNOVATION, FARMING SYSTEMS, WATER MANAGEMENT	RIA	FRANCE	ANNUAL CALLS	1 000 000
3	MT.2023.1	PRIMA PARTICIPATING STATES CALLS FOR PROPOSALS	WATER MANAGEMENT, FARMING SYSTEMS AND FOOD VALUE CHAIN	RIA/IA	MALTA, other PS	PRIMA CALL	100 000
4	MT.2023.2	PRIMA Training and Mobility Call	WATER MANAGEMENT, FARMING SYSTEMS AND FOOD VALUE CHAIN	RIA/Mobility	MALTA	PRIMA CALL	25 000
5	TR.2023.1	PRIMA PARTICIPATING STATES CALLS FOR PROPOSALS	WATER MANAGEMENT, FARMING SYSTEMS AND FOOD VALUE CHAIN	RIA/IA	TURKEY Other PS	PRIMA CALL	59 740
TOTAL							31 184 740

The Participating States Initiated Activities (PSIAs) listed above gather activities under the national programmes of PS. These activities are national calls for research and innovation, training actions and/or support for a joint research project or collaborative research units managed and funded directly by the PS. They are in-kind contributions of the PS to the PRIMA partnership and constitute an integral part of the PRIMA partnership contributing to the alignment of national programmes to PRIMA.

All participants in activities funded by the PRIMA-IS or by Participating States of the PRIMA partnership are required to label or co-label any communication or publication related to their activities with the following acknowledgement "[name of the activity/grant code] is part of the PRIMA partnership supported by the European Union", as well as with the PRIMA logo.

3.2 Activities supporting programme operation funded and implemented by PS: "Other Activities."

3.2.1 Capacity-building of Malta-based researchers that are willing to coordinate PRIMA proposals

Objectives:

This scheme will support and increase the capacities of Malta-based researchers willing to write a PRIMA proposal.

Organised by: Malta

Indicative budget: EURO 25 000

Timetable: will run parallel with Section 1 and 2 PRIMA calls

Preliminary version

4 Administrative budget of the PRIMA-IS for the implementation of the PRIMA programme

In 2023, the administrative costs of the PRIMA-IS will include the following items:

4.1. Personnel

Personnel costs will include the salaries and social costs of the following personnel: Director, Deputy Director, Project Coordinator, Project Officers (5), Legal Officer, Accounting and Finance Manager, Accounting and Finance Officer, Grant Administrative Assistants (2), and Communication Officer.

4.2. Meetings and missions

- Meetings of the Board of Trustees, the Steering Committee and the Scientific Advisory Committee
- Administrative Staff travel and accommodation costs

4.3. Consumables and supplies

- Postage and courier
- Office consumables & stationery
- Printing and photocopying
- Bank charges
- Office furniture and equipment (depreciation)
- Office utilities: electricity, water and gas
- Repairs and maintenance
- Computers and other IT equipment (depreciation)

4.4. Service contracts

- Foundation audit fees (reporting to the EC and annual statutory accounts)
- Telecommunications (voice and data)
- IT support services
- Office cleaning
- Communication and graphic layout.

4.5. Dissemination activities and materials

- Creation of materials for external communication (leaflets, posters, newsletters, etc.). (Costs will be under the Service contracts section).
- Organization of an info-day in Barcelona to provide information to applicants concerning 2023 calls for proposals, approximately in the First Quarter of 2023, depending on the approval date of AWP 2023. (Costs will be under Mission and travels section).

4.6 Budget overview tables

Table 10. Indicative budget for the administrative costs in EUR

Description	Amount
Personnel	1.324.138
Meetings and missions	120.000
Consumables and supplies	90.982
Service contracts	114.880
Total	1 650 000

Table 11. Overview of Planned Commitments to Activities of the PRIMA Programme 2023 by the Union (EU), the Participating States (PS) in EUR.

Activities	Contributions (in €)		
	EU	PS	Grand Total
EU funded Transnational Calls for Proposals IA (Section 1)	32.850.000		32.850.000
Participating States Transnational co-funded Call for Proposals, managed by PRIMA-IS (Section 2)		36.632.500	
Sub total transnational calls	32.850.000	36.632.500	69.482.500
Evaluation of Projects & Monitoring	450.000		450.000
PRIMA Prizes	20.000		20.000
PRIMA event	30.000		30.000
Sub total activities supporting programme operations	500.000		500.000
Participating States funded activities managed by PS to support programme implementation		25.000	25.000
PS contributions dedicated to the implementation of proposals resulting from PS funded calls		2.197.950	2.197.950
Participating States Initiated Activities		31.184.740	31.184.740
Sub-Total Implementation	33.350.000	70.040.190	103.390.190
EU-funded administrative costs of PRIMA-IS	1.650.000		1.650.000
Sub-Total Administration	1.650.000		1.650.000
Total Budget	35.000.000	70.040.190	105.040.190

Table 12. Detailed overview of planned commitments to activities of the PRIMA programme in 2023 by the European Union (EU) and the Participating States (PS) in EUR

Planned commitments (in €)						
	Programme CALLS	PRIMA-IS administrative costs	PS management costs	Activities supporting programme operations	PSIAs	Total in 2022
	Financial contributions	Financial contributions	In-kind contributions	Financial Contributions	Financial contributions	
European Union (EU)						
European Commission	32.850.000	1.650.000		500.000		35.000.000
Sub-Total EU	32.850.000	1.650.000	-	500.000		35.000.000
Participating States (PS)						
Algeria	2.000.000		120.000			2.120.000
Croatia	500.000		30.000			530.000
Cyprus	400.000		24.000			424.000
Egypt	3.650.000		219.000			3.869.000
France	6.000.000		360.000		1.000.000	7.360.000
Germany	2.500.000		150.000			2.650.000
Greece	800.000		48.000			848.000
Israel	500.000		30.000			530.000
Italy	7.000.000		420.000			7.420.000
Jordan	437.500		26.250			463.750
Lebanon	100.000		6.000			106.000
Luxembourg	500.000		30.000			530.000
Malta	500.000		30.000	25.000	125.000	680.000
Morocco	3.400.000		204.000			3.604.000
Portugal	1.125.000		67.500			1.192.500
Slovenia	170.000		10.200			180.200
Spain	4.250.000		255.000		30.000.000	34.505.000
Tunisia	1.500.000		90.000			1.590.000
Turkey	1.300.000		78.000		59.740	1.437.740
Sub-Total PSs	36.632.500	-	2.197.950	25.000	31.184.740	70.040.190
Sub-Total EU and PSs	69.482.500	1.650.000	2.197.950	525.000	31.184.740	105.040.190
Grand Total	69.482.500	1.650.000	2.197.950	525.000	31.184.740	105.040.190

Table 13. Overview of planned EU contributions towards PRIMA calls for Proposals in 2023 and activities supporting the implementation of the programme in EUR

	EU-funded PRIMA activities	Indicative EU contribution (in €)
Research & Innovation Actions	Section 1 Call 1	8.200.000
	Section 1 Call 2	8.200.000
	Section 1 Call 3	8.250.000
	Section 1 Call nexus	8.200.000
Other Activities	Activities for supporting the implementation of the programme	500.000
Administrative costs of the PRIMA-IS	Personnel, Missions, Consumables and supplies, Service contracts	1.650.000
	Total EU indicative contributions in 2023	35.000.000

5 General Annexes

5.1 Section 1 – Transnational calls and prizes organised and funded by the PRIMA-IS (European Union contribution)

5.1.1 List of countries eligible for funding

Legal entities established in the following countries and territories are eligible to receive funding through PRIMA grants:

a) The PRIMA Participating States⁴⁹ :

The following Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU): Croatia, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia. It includes the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) linked to some of these Member States⁵⁰:

The following Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC): Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey.

The following Third Countries not associated with to Horizon 2020 (TC), having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco.

These Associated Countries (AC) and Third Countries (TC) mentioned above are collectively called the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC).

In addition, the following entities are eligible to receive funding through PRIMA grants:

b) Any legal entity created under the European Union law.⁵¹

c) Any international European interest organisation⁵², as defined in point (12) of Article 2(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013

⁴⁹ New PS may join PRIMA and the regularly updated list of PS will be provided by PRIMA-IS (at the following link to be inserted to PRIMA webpage).

⁵⁰ Entities from Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) are eligible for funding under the same conditions as entities from the Member States to which the OCT in question is linked.

⁵¹ As set out in Art 7 (1) of H2020 Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013 and reflected in Art 7. (4) of the PRIMA Decision (EU) 2017/1324,

⁵² 'International European interest organisation' means an international organisation, (IO) the majority of whose members are Member States or associated countries, and whose principal objective is to promote scientific and technological cooperation in Europe".

For these two types of entities (b, c), their place of establishment is not relevant for eligibility for funding.

d) Any international organisation (IO)⁵³ **OR** any legal entity established in countries not listed above as PS may be eligible for funding provided that at least one of the following conditions is fulfilled:

- i. participation is deemed to be essential for carrying out the action⁵⁴;
- ii. Such funding is provided under a bilateral scientific and technological agreement or any other arrangement between the Union and the international organisation or, for entities established in a country that is not a Participating State, the country in which the legal entity is established.

Participants from countries not listed in point 5.1.1.a) and not falling under b), c) or d) above can participate, but they must fund their participation.

All participants with their funding must attach to their proposal a letter from their organisation (signed by a legal representative of the structure) attesting that the funds cover their participation in the projects (task(s), attendance at meetings, etc.) will be available.

5.1.2 Standard admissibility conditions, page limits and supporting documents

For all actions under AWP 2023, proposals must comply with the admissibility requirements set out in this sub-section unless supplemented or modified in the call conditions.

To be considered **admissible**, a proposal must be:

- a) Submitted in the electronic submission system before the deadline given in the call conditions
- b) Readable, accessible and printable.
- c) Complete⁵⁵ and inclusive the requested administrative data, the proposal description, and any other obligatory supporting documents specified in the call conditions;
- d) Include a draft plan for exploiting and disseminating the results unless otherwise

⁵³ The place of establishment of the IOs is not relevant for eligibility for funding.

⁵⁴ The applicant may be eligible for funding if its participation has clear benefits for the consortium, such as: access to unique know-how, access to research infrastructures, access to geographical environments, involving key partners in emerging markets, access to data, etc.

⁵⁵ In case the administrative data are missing for justified reasons, they can be submitted within 24 hours from the notification from PRIMA-IS

specified in the call conditions. The draft plan is not required for proposals at the first step of the two-stage submission process.

In addition to the above admissibility requirements, page limits will apply to parts of proposals/applications. Unless stated otherwise in the call conditions, the limit for a first-stage proposal is ten 10 pages, while the limit for a full proposal is 50 pages.

The electronic Submission System will automatically reject the proposal if it exceeds the page limits.

Proposals must be written in a legible font. The proposal templates will guide the formatting of acceptable fonts, margins, and pages.

The structure of proposals must correspond to the requirements specified under each section of the proposal template. Applicants are requested to use PRIMA's template, which can be downloaded from the PRIMA website under the relevant call section.

The following supporting documents will be required to determine the **operational capacity** of each applicant in grant proposals unless otherwise specified in the call:

- a) A curriculum vitae or description of the profile of the persons who will be primarily responsible for carrying out the proposed research and/or innovation activities;
- b) A list of up to five relevant publications and/or products, services (including widely-used datasets or software), or other achievements relevant to the call content;
- c) A list of up to five relevant previous projects or activities connected to the subject of this proposal;
- d) A description of any significant infrastructure and/or any major items of technical equipment relevant to the proposed work;
- e) A description of any third parties that are not represented as project partners but who will contribute to the work (e.g. providing facilities, computing resources).

The evaluators will carry out this scrutiny during the evaluation process under the selection criteria, particularly the award criterion 'Quality and efficiency of the implementation'. Please refer to Section 5.1.7, "Evaluation rules".

5.1.3 Standard eligibility conditions

All proposals must comply with the eligibility conditions set out in the Rules for Participation of Horizon 2020 Regulation (EU) No. 1290/2013 and any derogations to these as specified in Decision (EU) 2017/1324.

Furthermore, proposals must comply with the eligibility conditions set out in this subsection unless supplemented or modified in the call conditions.

A proposal will only be considered eligible if:

- a) the coordinator of the proposal is a legal entity established in a PRIMA PS⁵⁶
- b) its content corresponds, wholly or in part, to the scope and objectives of the topic to which it is submitted
- c) It complies with the eligibility conditions for participation set out in the Table below, depending on the type of action:

Table 14. General Eligibility conditions for participation in PRIMA Actions Section 1

Type of Action	Eligibility conditions for participation ^{57,58,59}
Research & Innovation Action (RIA)	<p>At least three legal entities established in three different countries considered as the Participating States⁶⁰ as defined in point 5.1.1. Each of the three must be established in a different country considered to be PRIMA PS by submission deadline under the relevant call, out of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -at least one must be established in an EU Member State or a third country associated to Horizon 2020 and not being an MPC and -at least one must be established in a third country bordering the Mediterranean Sea (MPC) <p>All three legal entities must be independent of each other.</p>
Innovation Action (IA)	<p>At least three legal entities established in four different countries considered as Participating States, as defined in point 5.1.1. Each of the three must be established in a different country considered to be PRIMA PS by submission deadline under the relevant call, out of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -at least one must be established in an EU Member State or a third country associated to Horizon 2020 and not being an MPC and -at least one must be established in a third country bordering the Mediterranean Sea (MPC) <p>All three legal entities must be independent of each other.</p>

⁵⁶ This measure is aimed to protect the Union's financial interests and is in line with Art. Article 7(7) of Decision (EU) 2017/1324.

⁵⁷ Natural or legal persons, groups or non-State entities covered by the Council sanctions restrictive measures in force are not eligible to participate in Union programmes. Please see the consolidated list of persons, groups and entities subject to Union financial sanctions restrictive measures, available at http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/sanctions/consol-list_en.html.

⁵⁸ Given that the EU does not recognise the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, legal persons established in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea or the city of Sevastopol are not eligible to participate in any capacity. This criterion also applies in cases where the action involves financial support given by grant beneficiaries to third parties established in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea or the city of Sevastopol (in accordance with Articles 204 and 205 of the Financial Regulation No (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046). Should the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol end, this Work Plan will be revised.

⁵⁹ The eligibility criteria formulated in Commission notice Nr. 2013/C 205/05 (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp.9-11) apply for all actions under this Work Plan, including for third parties that receive financial support under the action (in accordance with Articles 204 and 205 of the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046), notably programme co-fund actions.

⁶⁰ The latest information on the PRIMA PS can be found on PRIMA webpage: <http://prima-med.org/>.

5.1.4 Types of action: specific provisions and funding rates^{61,62}

Research and Innovation Actions (RIA)

Description: Action primarily consists of activities aiming to establish new knowledge and/or to explore the feasibility of new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution. For this purpose, they may include basic and applied research, technology development and integration, testing and validation on a small-scale prototype in a laboratory or simulated environment.

Projects may contain closely connected but limited demonstration or pilot activities aiming to show technical feasibility near the operational environment.

Funding rate: 100%

Innovation Actions (IA)

Description: Action primarily consisting of activities directly aiming at producing plans and arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services. For this purpose, they may include prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting, large-scale product validation and market replication.

A 'demonstration or pilot' aims to validate the technical and economic viability of new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution in an operational (or near to operational) environment, whether industrial or otherwise, involving, where appropriate a more extensive scale prototype or demonstrator.

A 'market replication' aims to support the first application/deployment in the market of an innovation that has already been demonstrated but not yet applied/deployed in the market due to market failures/barriers to uptake. 'Market replication' does not cover multiple applications in the market of an innovation⁶³ that has already been applied successfully once in the market. 'First' means new at least to PRIMA countries or new, at least to the application sector in question. Often such projects involve validation of technical and economic performance at the system level in real-life operating conditions provided by the market.

Projects may include limited research and development activities.

Funding rate: 70% (except for non-profit legal entities, where a rate of 100% applies).

Prizes

⁶¹ Eligible costs for all types of action are in accordance with the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046 and the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013. In addition, as training researchers on gender issues serves the policy objectives of Horizon 2020 and is necessary for the implementation of R&I actions, applicants may include in their proposal such activity and the following corresponding estimated costs that may be eligible for EU funding:

(a) Costs of delivering the training (personnel costs if the trainers are employees of the beneficiary or subcontracting if the training is outsourced);

(b) Accessory direct costs such as travel and subsistence costs, if the training is delivered outside the beneficiary's premises;

(c) Remuneration costs for the researchers attending the training, in proportion to the actual hours spent on the training (as personnel costs).

⁶² Participants may ask for a lower rate.

⁶³ A new or improved technology, product, design, process, service or solution.

Description: Prizes are financial contributions given as rewards following the publication of a contest. A 'recognition prize' is used to recognise past achievements and outstanding work after it has been performed, whereas an 'inducement prize' is used to spur investment in a given direction, by specifying a target before the performance of the work. The Rules of the Contest lay down the conditions for participation, the award criteria, the amount of the prize and the arrangements for the payment of the prize to the winners after their award.

PRIMA Rules of Contest for prizes are published on PRIMA website.

Prize amounts: The amount of the prize is specified in the contest. It is not linked to the costs incurred by the winner.

5.1.5 PRIMA Model Rules of Contest (RoC) for prizes

Model Rules of Contest for prizes are published on the PRIMA website: <https://prima-med.org/>

5.1.6 Technology Readiness Levels (TRL)

Where a topic description refers to a TRL, the following definitions apply, unless otherwise specified:

- TRL 1 – basic principles observed
- TRL 2 – technology concept formulated
- TRL 3 – experimental proof of concept
- TRL 4 – technology validated in lab
- TRL 5 – technology validated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)
- TRL 6 – technology demonstrated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)
- TRL 7 – system prototype demonstration in operational environment
- TRL 8 – system complete and qualified
- TRL 9 – actual system proven in an operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies; or in space)

5.1.7 Evaluation rules

1. Selection Criteria

- a) *Financial capacity:* In line with the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 and the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013. For grants,

coordinators will be invited – at the proposal stage – to complete a self-assessment using an on-line tool.⁶⁴

The financial capacity of a project coordinator is checked by PRIMA-IS when the requested funding to PRIMA-IS for the action is equal or superior to EUR 500 000 unless the coordinator is:

- i. a public body;
- ii. a higher or secondary education establishment;
- iii. an international organisation or body whose participation is guaranteed by the government of an EU country or associated country, following the PRIMA MGA.

b) *Operational capacity: As a distinct operation, carried out during the evaluation of the award criterion 'Quality and efficiency of the implementation', experts will indicate whether each participant has, or will have in due time, sufficient operational capacity to carry out its tasks in the proposed work plan successfully. This assessment will be based on the competence and experience of the applicant, including its operational resources (human, technical and other) and, if applicable, exceptionally the concrete measures proposed to obtain it by the time of the implementation of the tasks.*

Neither financial capacity nor operational capacity is subject to evaluation for prizes and first-stage proposals in a two-stage submission procedure.

Financial and Operational Capacity will be performed by PRIMA-IS at the evaluation phase of proposals in Second Stage calls and have the same timeline.

2. Award criteria, scores and weighting

Grant proposals will be evaluated by experts based on the **award criteria** 'excellence', 'impact' and 'quality and efficiency of the implementation' see Article 15 (1) of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013).

The aspects to be considered in each case depend on the types of action as set out in the Table below, unless stated otherwise in the call conditions:

⁶⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/organisations/lfv.html>

Table 15. Aspects to be considered during the proposal evaluation for each criterion (excellence, impact, quality and efficiency of the implementation) for each Type of Action in Section 1.

Type of Action	Excellence*	Impact*	Quality and efficiency of the implementation
	The following aspects will be taken into account, to the extent that the proposed work corresponds to the topic description in the work plan.	The following aspects will be taken into account:	The following aspects will be taken into account:
Research & Innovation Actions (RIAs), Innovation Actions (IA)	<p>Clarity and pertinence of the objectives;</p> <p>Soundness of the concept, and credibility of the proposed methodology;</p> <p>Fit with the scope and objectives of the PRIMA programme and the call topic description;</p> <p>Extent that the proposed work is beyond the state of the art, and demonstrates innovation potential (e.g. ground-breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches, new products, services or business and organisational models)</p> <p>Appropriate consideration of interdisciplinary approaches and, where relevant, use of stakeholder knowledge and gender dimension in research and innovation content.</p>	<p>The extent to which the outputs of the project would contribute to one or several of the expected impacts mentioned in the work plan under the relevant topic.</p> <p>-Scores of the proposals will not depend on the number of expected impacts covered.</p> <p>-Any substantial impacts not mentioned in the work plan, that would enhance innovation capacity, create new market opportunities, strengthen competitiveness and growth of companies, address issues related to climate change or the environment, or bring other important benefits for society;</p> <p>-Quality of the proposed measures to:</p> <p>-Exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), and to manage research data where relevant.</p> <p>-Communicate the project activities to different target audiences.</p>	<p>Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, including extent to which the resources assigned to work packages are in line with their objectives and deliverables;</p> <p>Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management;</p> <p>Complementarity of the participants and extent to which the consortium as whole brings together the necessary expertise;</p> <p>Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role.</p>

* In the evaluation of the first stage proposals, only aspects in bold will be considered.

3. Scoring and weighting:

Unless otherwise specified in the call conditions:

Evaluation scores will be awarded for the criteria, not for the different aspects listed in the above Table. For full proposals, each criterion will be scored out of 5. The threshold for individual criteria will be 3. The overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three individual scores, will be 10.

For Innovation Actions to determine the ranking, the criterion 'impact' score will be given a weight of 1.5.

Only the criteria 'excellence' and 'impact' will be evaluated for the evaluation of first-stage proposals under a two-stage submission procedure. With regard to the impact criterion, only the aspects in bold will be considered for first-stage proposals. The threshold for both individual criteria will be 4. For each indicative budget split in the call conditions, the overall threshold, applying to the sum of the two individual scores, will be set at the level such that the total requested budget of proposals admitted to the second stage is as close as possible to three times the available budget, and in any case, not less than two and a half times the available budget.

Therefore, the actual level will depend on the volume of proposals received. The threshold is expected to be set at 8 or 8.5.

4. Priority order for proposals with the same score:

Unless the call conditions indicate otherwise, the following method will be applied (except for the first step of the two-stage submission process, where proposals with the same score are kept together and no prioritisation is made.)

If necessary, the panel will determine a priority order for proposals with the same score within a ranked list. Whether or not such a prioritisation is carried out will depend on the available budget or other conditions set out in the call fiche.

The following approach will be applied successively for every group of *ex-aequo* proposals requiring prioritisation, starting with the highest-scored group, and continuing in descending order:

- a) Proposals that address topics, or sub-topics not otherwise covered by more highly-ranked proposals, will be considered to have the highest priority.
- b) The proposals identified under (a), if any, will themselves be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the criterion excellence. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on scores for the criterion impact.
- c) If necessary, any further prioritisation will be based on the following factor: first, the number of MPCs partners, and eventually the presence of SMEs, gender balance

among the personnel named in the proposal who will be primarily responsible for carrying out the research and/or innovation activities.

- d) The panel may decide to further prioritise by considering how to enhance the quality of the project portfolio through synergies between projects or other factors related to the objectives of the call or to PRIMA in general. These factors will be documented in the report of the Panel.
- e) The method described in (a), (b), (c) and (d) will then be applied to the remaining *ex-aequo* in the group.

At the end of the panel meeting, the panel will recommend one or more ranked lists for the proposals under evaluation, following the scoring systems indicated above. A ranked list for every indicative budget shown in the call conditions will be drawn up.

The award criteria, scoring and weighting will be set out for prizes in the Rules of contest.

5. Evaluation procedure

Calls are subject to a two-stage submission and evaluation process.

Independent experts evaluate proposals (see Article 15(7) Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation of Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013). As part of the evaluation by independent experts, a panel review will recommend one or more ranked lists for the proposals under the assessment, following the scoring systems indicated above and the panel's discussion. A ranked list for every indicative budget shown in the call conditions will be drawn up.

Individual Evaluation: Each eligible proposal is evaluated remotely by at least three independent expert evaluators (see Article 15 of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation (EU) No1290/2013), who carry out a technical evaluation based on the criteria mentioned above. An Individual Evaluation Report, which includes comments and scores for all evaluation criteria, is prepared by each evaluator.

Panel review: after the remote individual evaluation, evaluators meet in a panel to discuss and find agreement on the initial comments and scores attributed to each proposal. They will prepare an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) for each proposal, which shows the outcome of the evaluation of the project proposal. The panel is also responsible for preparing a ranking list of the proposals by consensus. Project funding decisions will be taken based on this ranking list. The panel configuration allows evaluators to overview all eligible proposals, checking the consistency of comments and marks, not just the ones they have evaluated, which enables them to decide fairly when ranking the proposals. ì

In case of disagreement or project proposals with the same score (only for full proposals), the panel will determine the priority order for proposals described in the section below.

If special procedures apply, they will be set out in the call conditions.

5.1.8 Funding decision and communication

The final decision on funding will be taken according to the project's rank as established in the panel's ranking list (starting with the project rank number 1 in the list in descending order) until funds are available.

The Proposal coordinators receive an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR), showing the evaluation results for a given proposal. In the ESR, the overall scores will be provided. Common feedback is provided to all coordinators for proposals that successfully pass the first stage of the two-stage submission process. Still, the first stage ESR is only sent after the second step evaluation.

Applicants whose proposal is awarded funding will receive a formal communication informing them that the grant preparation phase can start.

If special procedures apply, they will be set in the call conditions.

5.1.9 Budget flexibility

The budgets set out in AWP 2023 are indicative.

Unless otherwise stated, final budgets may vary following evaluation.

The final figures may vary by up to 20% compared to those indicated in AWP2023 for the following budgeted activities:

- Total expenditure for calls (up to 20% of the total spending for each call);
- Repartition of call budgets within a call (up to 20% of the total expenditure of the call);
- Evaluation and monitoring (up to 20% of the total expenditure for all these activities);

The cumulated changes above may not exceed 20% of the maximum contribution provided for this Work Plan.

5.1.10 Conditions related to open access to research data

According to Article 29.3 of the PRIMA Model Grant Agreement(s), participants will engage in research data sharing. This means that beneficiaries must deposit and take measures to make it possible for third parties to access, mine, exploit, reproduce and disseminate, free of charge for any user: 1) data needed to validate the results presented in scientific publications ('underlying data'); 2) other data as specified by the beneficiaries in their Data Management Plan (DMP, see below).

Consortia may "opt out" of these provisions before or after the signature of the grant agreement (thereby freeing themselves from the associated obligations) on the following grounds:

- a) Incompatibility with the Horizon 2020 obligation to protect results that are expected to be commercially or industrially exploited
- b) Incompatibility with the need for confidentiality in connection with security issues
- c) Incompatibility with rules on protecting personal data
- d) Incompatibility with the project's main aim
- e) If the project will not generate/collect any research data, or
- f) If there are other legitimate reasons not to provide open access to research data.

Please note that it is also possible to opt-out before signature and opt-in during project implementation initially.

Any costs related to implementing these provisions are eligible for reimbursement during the grant duration.

A proposal will not be evaluated more favourably if the consortium agrees to share its research data, nor will it be penalised if it opts out.

Further information on open access to research data is available on the PRIMA electronic submission system.

A Data Management Plan (DMP) details what data the project will generate, how it will be exploited and made accessible for verification and re-use, and how it will be curated and preserved. A Data Management Plan is obligatory for all projects that do not opt-out. Projects that opt out are also strongly encouraged to submit a Data Management Plan if it is relevant to their planned research. Further information on Data Management Plans is available on the [PRIMA website](#).

5.2 Section 2 – Transnational calls organised by PRIMA-IS and funded by the Participating States

5.2.1 List of countries eligible for funding

Legal entities established in the following PRIMA Participating States⁶⁵ will, in general, be eligible to receive funding through PRIMA grants:

- a) The following Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU): Croatia, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia. It includes the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) linked to these Member States⁶⁶:
- b) The following Third Countries associated to Horizon 2020 (AC) are Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey.
- c) The following Third Countries not associated to Horizon 2020 (TC), having concluded international agreements for scientific and technological cooperation setting out the terms and conditions of their participation in PRIMA: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco.
- d) These Associated (AC) and Third Countries (TC) mentioned in b) and c) above are the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC).

Participants from countries not listed above have to fund their own participation.

All participants with their funding have to attach to their proposal a letter from their organization (signed by a legal representative of the structure) attesting that the funds to cover their participation in the projects (task(s), participation in meetings...) will be available.

The information provided in this section is without prejudice to the national funding rules of PS, which may also envisage eligibility for funding for specific entities not established in these PS.

The national funding rules of a PS will determine whether a particular entity would be eligible for funding.

After PRIMA-IS does the eligibility check, the national funding bodies will perform a second eligibility check to verify eligibility for funding.⁶⁷

In this context, proposals that are considered eligible for participation by PRIMA-IS (at the consortium level) will enter into the evaluation process. However, should the National Funding Bodies deem one consortium partner not eligible for funding, PRIMA-IS may

⁶⁵ New PS may join PRIMA and the regularly updated list of PS will be provided by PRIMA-IS (at the following link: <http://prima-med.org/about-us/participating-states/>).

⁶⁶ Entities from Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) are eligible for funding under the same conditions as entities from the Member States to which the OCT in question is linked.

⁶⁷ The national regulations mention the eligible structures for funding (for example, some funding bodies can fund private entities and other cannot) and a list of criteria to check for their eligibility. National regulations also provide a comprehensive list of eligible costs (for example some funding bodies can support mobility or sub-contracting and other cannot). Therefore, before applying to the call of the Section 2, applicants must verify their own national eligibility for funding by reading carefully the national regulations and by contacting the national contact point appointed for this task.

require additional information from the consortium or the partner concerned, such as an attestation that the funds to cover the participation in the project will be available. Applicants should refer to the national regulations for eligibility for funding and contact their national funding bodies (NCP) ⁶⁸.

5.2.2 Standard admissibility conditions, page limits and supporting documents.

For all actions under AWP2023, proposals must comply with the admissibility requirements set out in this sub-section unless supplemented or modified in the call conditions.

To be considered **admissible**, a proposal must be:

- a) Submitted in the electronic submission system before the deadline given in the call conditions;
- b) Readable, accessible and printable;
- c) Complete and inclusive of the requested administrative data, the proposal description, and any other obligatory supporting documents specified in the call conditions;
- d) Include a draft plan to exploit and disseminate the results unless otherwise specified in the call conditions. The draft plan is not required for proposals at the first step of the two-stage submission process.

In addition to the above admissibility requirements, page limits will apply to parts of proposals/applications. Unless stated otherwise in the call conditions, the limit for a first-stage proposal is 10 pages, while the limit for a full proposal is 50 pages.

The electronic Submission System will automatically reject the proposal if it exceeds the page limits.

Proposals must be written in a legible font. The proposal templates will include further guidance on acceptable fonts, margins, and other page formatting.

The structure of proposals must correspond to the requirements specified under each section of the proposal template. Applicants are requested to use PRIMA's template, which can be downloaded from the PRIMA website under the relevant call section.

The following supporting documents will be required to determine the operational capacity for grant proposals unless otherwise specified in the call:

- a) A curriculum vitae or description of the profile of the persons who will be primarily responsible for carrying out the proposed research and/or innovation activities;
- b) A list of up to five relevant publications and/or products, services (including widely-used datasets or software), or other achievements relevant to the call content;
- c) A list of up to five relevant previous projects or activities connected to the subject of this proposal;

⁶⁸ Find the NCP contacts at the following link

- d) A description of any significant infrastructure and/or any major items of technical equipment relevant to the proposed work;
- e) A description of any third parties that are not represented as project partners but who will nonetheless be contributing towards the work (e.g. providing facilities, computing resources).

The evaluators will carry out this scrutiny during the evaluation process under the selection criteria, in particular the award criterion 'Quality and efficiency of the implementation'. Please refer to Section 5.2.6 "Evaluation rules".

5.2.3 Standard eligibility conditions.

All proposals must comply with the eligibility conditions based on the ones set out in the Rules for Participation of Horizon 2020 Regulation (EU) No.1290/2013 and any derogations to these as specified in Decision (EU) 2017/1324.

Furthermore, proposals must comply with the eligibility conditions in this sub-section unless supplemented or modified in the call conditions.

A proposal will only be considered eligible if:

- a) the coordinator of the proposal is a legal entity established in a PRIMA PS⁶⁹
- b) its content corresponds, wholly or in part, to the topic for which it is submitted
- c) It complies with the eligibility conditions for participation set out in the Table below, depending on the type of action
- d) It complies with national regulations⁷⁰

⁶⁹ This measure is aimed to protect the Union's financial interests and is in line with Article 7(7) of Decision (EU) 2017/1324.the PRIMA Decision.

⁷⁰ Please refer to the National Regulations in the PRIMA website at the following link: <https://prima-med.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/National-Regulations-2020-v2.pdf>

Table 16. General Eligibility conditions for participation in PRIMA Actions Section 2.

Type of Action	Eligibility conditions for participation ^{71,72,73}
Research & Innovation Action (RIA)	<p>At least three legal entities established in three different countries are considered as the Participating States⁷⁴ as defined in point 5.2.1. Each of the three must be established in a different country considered to be PRIMA PS by the submission deadline under the relevant call, out of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -at least one must be established in an EU Member State or a third country associated with Horizon 2020 and not being an MPC and -at least one must be established in a third country bordering the Mediterranean Sea (MPC) <p>All three legal entities must be independent of each other.</p>
Innovation Action (IA)	<p>At least three legal entities are established in three different countries considered as the Participating States, as defined in point 5.2.1⁷⁵ Each of the three must be established in a different country considered to be PRIMA PS by the submission deadline under the relevant call out of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -at least one must be established in an EU Member State or a third country associated to Horizon 2020 and not be an MPC and -at least one must be established in a third country bordering the Mediterranean Sea (MPC) <p>All three legal entities must be independent of each other.</p>

⁷¹ Natural or legal persons, groups or non-State entities covered by the Council sanctions restrictive measures in force are not eligible to participate in Union programmes. Please see the consolidated list of persons, groups and entities subject to Union financial sanctions restrictive measures, available at http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/sanctions/consol-list_en.html.

⁷² Given that the EU does not recognise the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, legal persons established in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea or the city of Sevastopol are not eligible to participate in any capacity. This criterion also applies in cases where the action involves financial support given by grant beneficiaries to third parties established in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea or the city of Sevastopol (in accordance with Articles 204 and 205 of the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046). Should the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol end, this Work Plan will be revised.

⁷³ The eligibility criteria formulated in Commission notice Nr. 2013/C 205/05 ([OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp.9-11](#)) apply for all actions under this Work Plan, including for third parties that receive financial support under the action (in accordance with Articles 204 and 205 of the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046), notably programme co-fund actions.

⁷⁴ The latest information on the PRIMA PS can be found on PRIMA webpage: <http://prima-med.org/>.

⁷⁵ The latest information on the PRIMA PS can be found on PRIMA webpage: <http://prima-med.org/>.

5.2.4 Types of activities: specific provisions and funding rates⁷⁶

Description of the activities: Research and Innovation activities (RIA)

These activities primarily aim to establish new knowledge and/or to explore the feasibility of new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution. For this purpose, they may include basic and applied research, technology development and integration, testing and validation on a small-scale prototype in a laboratory or simulated environment. Projects may be closely connected, but little demonstration or pilot activities aim to show technical feasibility in a near to operational environment.

All the projects will have to include collaborative research. Collaborative research is compulsory and undertaken by a partnership of institutions (consortium) designed to produce new knowledge through scientific research, whereby each team within the partnership actively pursues specific tasks and objectives to pool the results to contribute to the achievement of a set of common, well-defined project objectives.

Funding level

The level of funding and the list of eligible costs are set out in the national regulations. Each applicant has to comply with the requirements stated in their national regulations. A contact point established in each country and contacted directly by the applicant belonging to the same country will inform the applicants about the rules.

5.2.5 Technology Readiness Levels (TRL)

Where a topic description refers to a TRL, the following definitions apply, unless otherwise specified:

TRL 1 – basic principles observed

TRL 2 – technology concept formulated

TRL 3 – experimental proof of concept

TRL 4 – technology validated in lab

TRL 5 – technology validated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)

TRL 6 – technology demonstrated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)

TRL 7 – system prototype demonstration in operational environment

TRL 8 – system complete and qualified

TRL 9 – actual system proven in operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies; or in space)

⁷⁶ Participants may ask for a lower rate.

5.2.6 Evaluation rules

1. Selection Criteria

- a) *Financial capacity*: Financial capacity will be checked in accordance with the rules based on those included in the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 and the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013. For grants, coordinators will be invited – at the proposal stage – to complete a self-assessment using an online tool⁷⁷.
- b) *Operational capacity*: As a distinct operation carried out during the evaluation of the award criterion 'Quality and efficiency of the implementation', experts will indicate whether the participants have sufficient operational capacity to carry out the proposed work, based on the competence and experience of the individual participant(s).

2. Award criteria, scores and weighting

Experts will evaluate grant proposals based on the award criteria 'excellence', 'impact' and 'quality and efficiency of the implementation' (see Article 15 (1) of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013).

The aspects to be considered are set out in the Table next page unless stated otherwise in the call conditions:

⁷⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/organisations/lfv.html>

Table 17. Aspects to be considered during the proposal evaluation for each criterion (excellence, impact, quality and efficiency of the implementation in Section 2 calls.

Type of Action	Excellence*	Impact*	Quality and efficiency of the implementation
Research & Innovation Activities* (RIAs),	<p>The following aspects will be taken into account, to the extent that the proposed work corresponds to the topic description in the work plan.</p> <p>Clarity and pertinence of the objectives;</p> <p>Soundness of the concept, and credibility of the proposed methodology;</p> <p>Fit with the scope and objectives of the PRIMA programme and the call topic description;</p> <p>Extent that the proposed work is beyond the state of the art, and demonstrates innovation potential (e.g. ground-breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches, new products, services or business and organisational models)</p> <p>Appropriate consideration of interdisciplinary approaches and, where relevant, use of stakeholder knowledge and gender dimension in research and innovation content.</p>	<p>The following aspects will be taken into account:</p> <p>The extent to which the project outputs would contribute to one or several of the expected impacts mentioned in the work plan under the relevant topic.</p> <p>-Scores of the proposals will not depend on the number of expected impacts covered.</p> <p>-Any substantial impacts not mentioned in the work plan, that would enhance innovation capacity, create new market opportunities, strengthen competitiveness and growth of companies, address issues related to climate change or the environment, or bring other important benefits for society;</p> <p>-Quality of the proposed measures to:</p> <p>-Exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), and to manage research data where relevant.</p> <p>-Communicate the project activities to different target audiences.</p>	<p>The following aspects will be taken into account:</p> <p>Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, including extent to which the resources assigned to work packages, are in line with their objectives and deliverables;</p> <p>Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management;</p> <p>Complementarity of the participants and extent to which the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary expertise;</p> <p>Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role.</p>

* In evaluating the first stage proposals, only aspects in bold will be considered.

3. Scoring and weighting:

Unless otherwise specified in the call conditions:

Evaluation scores will be awarded for the overall criteria and not for the aspects listed above. For full proposals, each criterion will be scored out of 5. The threshold for individual criteria will be 3. The overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three individual scores, will be 10.

Only the criteria 'excellence' and 'impact' will be evaluated for the evaluation of first-stage proposals under a two-stage submission procedure. Concerning the impact criterion, only the aspects in bold will be considered for first-stage proposals. The threshold for both individual criteria will be 4.

For each indicative budget split in the call conditions, the overall threshold, applying to the sum of the two individual scores, will be set at the level such that the total requested budget of proposals admitted to stage 2 is as close as possible to three times the available budget, and in any case, not less than two and a half times the available funding.

The actual level will therefore depend on the volume of proposals received.

The threshold is expected to be set at 8 or 8.5 usually.

4. Evaluation procedure

Calls are subject to a two-stage submission and evaluation process.

Individual Evaluation: Each eligible proposal is evaluated remotely by at least three independent expert evaluators (see Article 15 (7) of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation (EU) No1290/2013), who carry out a technical evaluation based on the criteria mentioned above. An Individual Evaluation Report, which includes comments and scores for all evaluation criteria, is prepared by each evaluator.

Panel review: after the remote individual evaluation, evaluators meet in a panel to discuss and find agreement on the initial comments and scores attributed to each proposal. They will prepare an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) for each proposal, which shows the outcome of the evaluation of the project proposal. The panel is also responsible for preparing a ranking list of the proposals by consensus. Project funding decisions will be taken based on this ranking list. The panel configuration allows evaluators to overview all eligible proposals, checking the consistency of comments and marks, not just the ones they have evaluated, which enables them to decide fairly when ranking the proposals. i

In case of disagreement or project proposals with the same score (only for full proposals), the panel will determine the priority order for proposals described in the section below.

5. Priority order for proposals with the same score:

Unless the call conditions indicate otherwise, the following method will be applied (except for the first step of the two-stage submission process, where proposals having the same score are kept together and no prioritisation is made.)

If necessary, the panel will determine a priority order for proposals with the same score within a ranked list. Whether or not such a prioritisation is carried out will depend on the available budget or other conditions set out in the call fiche.

The following approach will be applied successively for every group of *ex-aequo* proposals requiring prioritisation, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:

- a) Proposals that address topics, or sub-topics not otherwise covered by more highly-ranked proposals, will be considered the highest priority.
- b) The proposals identified under (1), if any, will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the criterion excellence. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on scores for the criterion impact.
- c) If necessary, any further prioritisation will be based on the following factor: number of MPCs partners, presence of SMEs, and gender balance among the personnel named in the proposal who will be primarily responsible for carrying out the research and/or innovation activities.
- d) The panel may decide to further prioritise by considering how to enhance the quality of the project portfolio through synergies between projects or other factors related to the call or PRIMA's objectives in general. These factors will be documented in the report of the Panel.
- e) The method described in (a), (b), (c) and (d) will then be applied to the remaining *ex-aequo* in the group.

At the end of the panel meeting, the panel will recommend one or more ranked lists for the proposals under evaluation, following the scoring systems indicated above. A ranked list for every indicative budget shown in the call conditions will be drawn up.

5.2.7 Funding decision and communication

In line with Article 6(10), point (c), of Decision (EU) 2017/1324, the proposals will be ranked according to evaluation results. PRIMA-IS will select proposals to be funded based on this ranking. Since the funding of participants in the activities will be the responsibility of PS and not PRIMA-IS, the respective PS will need to provide adequate funding in line with the national rules. If the PS cannot fund one or more projects, PRIMA-IS may select to fund the projects directly following them in the ranking list(s).

The Proposal coordinators receive an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR), showing the evaluation results for a given proposal. In the ESR, the overall scores will be provided for proposals that successfully pass the first stage of the two-stage submission process. Common feedback is provided to all coordinators, but the first stage ESR is only sent after the second step evaluation.

Applicants whose proposal is awarded funding will receive a formal communication informing them that the grant preparation phase can start.

If special procedures apply, they will be set in the call conditions.

5.2.8 Budget flexibility

The budgets set out in AWP2023 are indicative.

Unless otherwise stated, final budgets may vary following evaluation.

The final figures may vary by up to 20% compared to those indicated in AWP2023 for the following budgeted activities:

- Total expenditure for calls (up to 20% of the total spending for each call);
- Repartition of call budgets within a call (up to 20% of the total expenditure of the call);
- Evaluation and monitoring (up to 20% of the total spending on all these activities);
- Other individual actions are not implemented through calls for proposals (up to 20% for each).

5.2.9 Conditions related to open access to research data

Participants are encouraged to engage in research data sharing. This means that beneficiaries are encouraged to deposit and take measures to make it possible for third parties to access, mine, exploit, reproduce and disseminate, free of charge for any user:

(1) Data needed to validate the results presented in scientific publications ('underlying data'); and (2) other data as specified by the beneficiaries in their Data Management Plan (DMP, see below).

Consortia may "opt-out" of these provisions on the following grounds:

- a) Incompatibility with the need to protect results that are expected to be commercially or industrially exploited
- b) Incompatibility with the need for confidentiality in connection with security issues
- c) Incompatibility with rules on protecting personal data
- d) Incompatibility with the project's main aim
- e) If the project will not generate/collect any research data, or
- f) If there are other legitimate reasons not to provide open access to research data

Please note that it is also possible to opt out before signature and opt-in during project implementation initially.

A proposal will not be evaluated more favourably if the consortium agrees to share its research data, nor will it be penalized if it opts out.

Further information on open access to research data is available on the PRIMA electronic submission system.

A Data Management Plan (DMP) details what data the project will generate, how it will be exploited and made accessible for verification and re-use, and how it will be curated and preserved. The use of a Data Management Plan is encouraged for all projects that do not opt-out.

Projects that opt out are also strongly encouraged to submit a Data Management Plan if relevant for their planned research. Further information on Data Management Plans is available on [PRIMA website](#).

5.2.10 Applicable common principles to all PSIAs and activities

Participant States Initiated Activities (PSIAs) are activities under the national programmes of the Participating States carried out following applicable national legislation.

Under Article 6(9) of Decision (EU) 2017/1324, activities included in AWP2023 that the PS funds without the Union financial contribution must be implemented in compliance with common principles adopted by PRIMA-IS after obtaining approval from the Commission. The common principles shall take into account the principles set out in this Decision, in Title VI of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and in Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013, in particular the principles of equal treatment, transparency, independent peer review evaluation and selection.

Equal treatment

Participation in PSIA, including the right to receive funding, should generally be open to any type of legal entity, private or public. However, it is understood and accepted that national legislation or specific objectives of action may dictate that only certain legal entities, e.g. public institutions, can participate and receive funding in particular activities.

Funding to PSIA actions should be allocated to the broadest possible extent through open calls for proposals, and the PRIMA programme should be mentioned in the call text. However, it is understood and accepted that existing national research infrastructures and organisations, e.g. publicly funded research institutes, can be used to implement parts or the entire PSIA. Therefore, funding may not be allocated through open calls for proposals but through internal competition within the research infrastructure or an overall strategic research plan.

The principle of equality and non-discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation should be observed and promoted.

Transparency

The review process's evaluation, selection criteria, and details should be published before applicants submit proposals.

Funding awarding through calls for proposals or institutional funding is made public.

Any communication or publication related to PSIA, whether undertaken by the PRIMA Foundation, a Participating State or participants in an activity, must be labelled or co-labelled as '[name of the PSIA] is part of the PRIMA programme supported by the European Union.

Independent peer-review evaluation

Applications submitted through open calls for proposals should be evaluated by panels of leading independent domestic and/or non-domestic experts (peer review).

In case of direct funding to a national research infrastructure or organisation, the quality of the research output by the national research infrastructures or organisation should be assessed regularly and structured manner, preferably through independent peer review.

Ethics and scientific integrity

As defined in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, the principles of scientific integrity should be observed and promoted.

Fundamental ethical principles, particularly those related to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the European Convention on Human Rights and its Supplementary Protocols, should be adhered to and enforced, both during the selection of funding and during the subsequent implementation of the actions.

Exploitation and dissemination of results

The findings of research activities included as PSIAs in the PRIMA Annual Work Plan should be promptly made available to the research community and the public.

Preliminary version

5.2.11 Specific additional information and relations between the beneficiaries and their national funding bodies

Grant agreement

Each beneficiary will be funded directly by its own national funding body. Therefore, a grant agreement is concluded between each beneficiary and its national funding body. The rules for this agreement are the national rules set in the national regulations.

The grant agreement will cover the entire duration of the project and must be synchronized in time (starting date of the activities and end of the project) between the different funding bodies involved in the project's funding.

Consortium agreement

A consortium agreement is required and must be sent to all the funding bodies involved in the project. This consortium agreement must address at least:

- a) The repartition of the tasks between partners;
- b) The sharing of the intellectual property rights of the project results;
- c) The conditions of publication and dissemination of the results;
- d) The technology transfer and the exploitation of the results
- e) Any specific requirements from a funding body

The funding agencies provide no template for the consortium agreement.

The Project Coordinator

Each Consortium needs to appoint a Coordinator, who will have the following role:

For the preparation and the submission of the proposal:

- Be the single point of contact between the PRIMA-IS secretariat and the consortium partners from proposal preparation to submission;
- Ensure that all the partners involved in the consortium are eligible for participation. Submit the Application Form on behalf of the Consortium.

During the implementation of the project:

- Be the single point of contact between the PRIMA-IS secretariat and the consortium partners from the proposal preparation to submission;
- Be a point of contact between the Funding bodies and the consortium partners in case of requiring a grant extension or scientific/managerial modifications. The

funding agencies should also be in direct contact with their beneficiaries to discuss changes that affect the grant agreement;

- Ensure the role of supervision of the project workflow with the help of WP leaders;
- Joint consortium reports (e.g., progress reports for PRIMA-IS) should be sent directly by the coordinator to the PRIMA-IS, with the national funding agencies in the copy.

The coordinator will not be responsible for the financial management of PRIMA research funding, which will be handled directly between national beneficiaries and their national funding bodies in each participating country.

Preliminary version

6. A detailed description of the Participating States Initiated Activities (PSIAs)

The PRIMA Participating States implement and fund a broad array of national programme activities that contribute to the objectives of the PRIMA programme. These Participating and Partner States' Initiated Activities (PSIAs) are implemented and funded independently from the PRIMA-IS by one PS alone or by several PS without the Union's financial contribution.

PSIAs are an important contribution from PS to the PRIMA programme as they promote research collaboration in the region and enable PSs to have an overview of activities that their country (research and development agencies, different Ministries, etc.) funds on water management, farming systems and food-value chains and they support the PRIMA programme achieving its objective of promoting cooperation, networking and integration of national research programmes. For these reasons, PSIAs are included in the PRIMA Annual Work Plans.

In line with Article 6 (8) of the [Decision \(EU\) 2017/1324](#), those activities may be included in the Annual Work Plan only following the positive outcome of their external independent evaluation by international peer review concerning the objectives of PRIMA and may be launched only in the reference year and only after the adoption of the Annual Work Plan for that year.

The activities that the expert evaluators have approved as PSIAs are listed in Table 9 and the sections below, with a brief overview of the PS, the subject matter of the activity, the countries in the Mediterranean region where the activity is conducted, and the total indicative commitment for the activity. Wherever relevant, local currencies have been converted into Euros using official exchange rates.

The Participating States Initiated Activities now planned under the AWP 2023 total **EUR 31 184 740** (Table 9)

Please note that following Article 6(9) of Decision (EU) 2017/1324, activities included in AWP2023 that the PS funds without the Union financial contribution must be implemented in compliance with common principles adopted by PRIMA-IS after obtaining approval from the EU Commission. In particular the principles of equal treatment, transparency, independent peer-review evaluation and selection (provided in sub-section [5.2.10](#))

Any communication related to PSIAs, whether undertaken by the PRIMA-IS, a Participating State or any of the participants in a PSIA, must indicate that they are part of the PRIMA programme supported by the EU (see section [3.1](#)).

PRIMA Participating States to the PRIMA programme will be based on assessing the information provided through the PRIMA-IS annual reporting to the European Commission.

This reporting should include reporting by the Participating States according to the requirements agreed with the European Commission in line with Article 19 of the Delegation Agreement concluded between PRIMA-IS and the European Commission of [...].

This assessment will verify the costs incurred by the Participating States for the implementation of those PSIAs, the relevance of those PSIAs in contributing to the specific objectives of the programme, their correct labelling in any communication, and their compliance with the common principles agreed upon by the PRIMA-IS, on behalf of the Participating States, and the European Commission.

Preliminary version

6.1 ES.2023.1

Code	ES-2023-1
Theme:	Water management, Agrofood value chain, Farming Systems
Activity title	Funding allocated to National projects in the Agro-food value chain, Farming and Management of water R&D fields
Activity description	
Abstract (publishable)	<p>CDTI funds R&D projects carried out by Spanish companies in a continuous open call. This R&D call is aimed at Industry-driven and market-oriented R&D projects in Spain, consisting of the development or substantial improvement of new products, processes or services.</p> <p>Only enterprises are eligible to get funding support; participation of research institutes/universities and other organizations are welcome as self-funded participants or subcontractors. These R&D projects must have a minimum eligible budget of EUR 175 000, and their length may be from 12 to 36 months.</p> <p>The funding modality for the project will be a Partially Reimbursable Aid, covering up to 85% of the total approved budget. This CDTI funding may be distributed in the following way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reimbursable tranche (RT) within 10 or 15 years, to be counted from the project's centre of gravity, which is calculated following the project duration and the budget target amount. The first reimbursement is made three years after the project's centre of gravity and at least two years after its completion date. As mentioned above, the RT's interest rate shall be fixed and equal to the one-year Euribor, which shall be determined when the project is approved. • A non-reimbursable tranche (NRT), adjusted following the characteristics of the project, the beneficiary and the source of the funds used for the funding. This tranche shall be contingent upon fund availability. • An ex-ante document to allow the beneficiary to benefit from a tax exemption related to R&D activities.
Rationale/Impact	<p>It's expected to foster the business competitiveness of beneficiaries, improve their portfolio of products and services, and increase the efficiency of their processes and activities.</p> <p>The outcomes of these projects will lead to improving farming and agro-food activities, the development of eco-friendly activities and production processes, and more sustainable water use. A better quality of products will be promoted, and traceability in the food chain. A considerable reduction of environmental impact and more efficient use of available resources is expected.</p>
Objectives	The main objective of this instrument is to support the R&D activities of the Spanish companies to foster their competitiveness through the development of new/ improved products, processes and services, focused on fulfilling economic,

	<p>environmental and social challenges. This Call hasn't a sectorial approach, so it is open to all sectors, including the fields of water, environment, farming, ecosystem, agro-food, etc.</p> <p>With a bottom-up approach, R&D open call projects aim to advance in the State of the Art of technologies, products and processes tackled by Spanish companies which operates in the so related fields, encouraging cooperation schemes with research entities and other companies from Spain or another country all around the world.</p>
Deliverables	
Information on the eventual call(s) for Proposals	
Title of the call for Proposals	National R&D continuous open CDTI call
Publication date (call 2022)	This call has been open since the 80s, so it will be open for 2023. There won't be a publication date.
Deadline for applications	31-12-2023
Expected date of award	Approval of these projects could be done throughout 2022 and 2023 (depending on the submission date)
Scope of the call for Proposals	R&D and innovation activities with a TRL 3-6 are carried out by private companies.
Implementation	
Type of Activity	Research Innovation Action (RIA) ✓
Start date of the activity	Projects can be submitted since the 1st of January 2023
Duration	The whole year 2023
Funding institution	CDTI-Spanish Agency of Innovation
Funding beneficiaries	Spanish private companies and Economic Interest Groups (EIG)
Countries where research is conducted	Spain
Collaborating partner(s)	Companies, Research bodies (Universities, Public Research Bodies and Innovation and Technological Centres)
Commitments	
Total national public commitment for the entire duration of the activity (in EUR)	According to the figures previously committed by CDTI to the PRIMA PSIA's, this amount could reach up to 30M€.
Alignment with PRIMA Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda	The CDTI R&D National Call funds the development of technologies, processes and products in water, natural resources, agro-food, environment, farming, etc., with a bottom-up approach focused on market and social needs.

	<p>The supported projects will contribute to business competitiveness by tackling technology, social and environmental challenges in related fields, which are included in the Thematic Areas of PRIMA Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda.</p> <p>Activities funded by the CDTI R&D instrument support interdisciplinary and cross-cutting actions that are aligned with the PRIMA AWP.</p>
Website	https://www.cdti.es/index.asp?MP=100&MS=802&MN=2

Preliminary version

6.2 FR.2023.1

Code	FR-2023-1
Theme:	Water management, Agri-food value chain, Farming Systems
Activity title	Research Projects funded by ANR under the Annual National Call for proposals (AAPG) on PRIMA-related issues
Activity description	
Abstract (publishable)	The Generic Call for Proposals (AAPG) is the French National Research Agency's (ANR) main call. It is directed toward all scientific communities and all public and private players involved in French research. It is designed to give researchers in various scientific fields access to co-funding in many research themes, basic or applied, in addition to their allocated recurrent funding.
Rationale/Impact	<p>The French National Research Agency (ANR) is a public administrative institution under the French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. The agency funds project-based research by public operators cooperating or with private companies.</p> <p>The ANR was founded in 2005 to promote French project-based research and to stimulate innovation by promoting the emergence of collaborative multidisciplinary projects and encouraging collaboration between the public and private sectors. It also aims to strengthen the position of French research at the EU level and worldwide. The Agency's missions, defined in the decree of 1 August 2006 amended on 24 March 2014, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To fund and promote the development of basic and targeted research, technological innovation, technology transfer and public-private partnerships • To implement the Work Programme approved by the French Minister of Research, following consultation with the supervisory ministers of France's research bodies and public higher education institutions • To manage major government investment programmes in the fields of higher education and research and oversee their implementation • To strengthen scientific cooperation across the EU and worldwide by aligning its Work Programme with EU and international initiatives • To analyse trends in research offering and assess the impact of the funding it allocates on scientific output in France <p>The ANR's activities are thus designed to support the excellence of French research at various TRL, support basic research, encourage academic and public-private scientific partnerships and promote EU and international cooperation. To achieve these goals, it organises competitive calls for proposals. It conducts rigorous selection processes based on peer review in compliance with international standards: impartiality, equal treatment, confidentiality, ethics, scientific integrity and transparency.</p>

	As part of its quality policy, the ANR is strengthening the reliability of its procedures and continuously adapting them to guarantee selection quality, optimising the quality of the service delivered to its community of users, and ensuring its activities efficiency. The Agency has ISO 9001 certification for its selection processes.
Objectives	<p>AAPG 2023 is divided into 50 research themes, each with its own Scientific Evaluation Panel (CES):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 37 research themes across seven main scientific fields: environmental sciences, energy and materials sciences, digital sciences, life sciences, social sciences and humanities, mathematics and its interactions, and physics of matter, high-energy, Earth and universe sciences. • There are 13 research themes covering cross-disciplinary challenges and integrating issues from various scientific fields. <p>ANR aims at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding and promoting the development of basic and targeted research, technological innovation, technology transfer and public-private partnerships • Implementing the Work Programme approved by the French Minister of Research, following consultation with the supervisory ministers of France's research bodies and public higher education institutions • Managing major government investment programmes in the fields of higher education and research and overseeing their implementation • Strengthening scientific cooperation across the EU and worldwide by aligning its Work Programme with EU and international initiatives • Analysing trends in research offering and assessing the impact of the funding it allocates on scientific output in France
Deliverables	
Information on the eventual Call(s) for Proposals	
Title of the call for Proposals	Generic Call for Proposals 2022
Publication date (call 2023)	Publication of the work programme and call for proposals in July 2023. Publication of the results of the call for proposals in July 2023
Deadline for applications	Deadline April 2024
Expected date of award	July 2024
Scope of the call for Proposals	
Implementation	
Type of Activity	Research Innovation Action (RIA) ✓

Start date of the activity	July 2023
Duration	One year (programme duration)
Funding institution	ANR
Funding beneficiaries	All scientific communities and all public and private players involved in French research
Countries where research is conducted	Fieldwork and collaborations may be performed in any country
Collaborating partner(s)	All the countries participating in PRIMA calls are included as potential collaborating partners
Commitments	
Total national public commitment for the entire duration of the activity (in EUR)	FR – EUR 1 000 000
Alignment with PRIMA Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda	The funded projects align with most of the main PRIMA Calls thematic areas or crosscutting water management and farming systems. Research projects on food security and the agri-food value chain are also increasingly funded.
Website	https://anr.fr/en/

6.3 MT.2023.1

Code	MT-2023-1
Theme:	Water management, Farming Systems, Agri-Food Value Chain
Activity title	PRIMA Participating States Calls for Proposals supporting PRIMA
Activity description	
Abstract (publishable)	Through this action, bilateral/multilateral joint calls for proposals in PRIMA-related thematic areas may be set up between Malta's funding agency MCST and other PS funding agencies. Such an initiative aims to build the Research and Innovation capacities of the PS involved in the areas of Water, Food and Agriculture.
Rationale/Impact	<p>These calls focus on building research and innovation capacities and developing knowledge and common innovative solutions for integrated water provision and management in the Mediterranean region, making them more climate resilient, efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally and socially sustainable.</p> <p>This will be achieved through a competitive and transparent process of selection.</p> <p>The main impacts will be to (but not limited to these):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Successful projects will act as a springboard for consortia to apply for Section 1 and Section 2 PRIMA Calls 2) Increase awareness on the PRIMA Initiative 3) Further support local researchers who have been unsuccessful in previous PRIMA Calls 4) Encourage partnerships with other PRIMA PS to launch bi-lateral and multi-lateral calls to support the collaborative nature of PRIMA further
Objectives	<p>The general objective of the call is to promote national and regional research and innovation in the strategic thematic areas of PRIMA and to encourage more participation in PRIMA activities.</p> <p>This call will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generate new knowledge relevant to the PRIMA thematic areas • foster capacity-building through learning by doing and hands-on training • strengthen the link between evidence generation and policy-making in the PRIMA thematic areas • enhance experience exchange with researchers in the other PRIMA PS.
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bilateral R&I projects on Water Management, Agriculture and Agro-Food Value Chains - Mobility of researchers between the PRIMA PS - Research outcomes – scientific papers, attendance at conferences, participation in joint events between the PS as well as other dissemination efforts. - Project reporting during the interim and end of projects. - Increase the possibility of establishing consortia for future proposal submissions under Section 1 and Section 2 PRIMA Calls

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Preliminary version

Information on the eventual Call(s) for Proposals	
Title of the call for Proposals	Calls for Proposals for the Implementation of Projects under the thematic areas of PRIMA
Publication date (call 2023)	1 st quarter of 2023
Deadline for applications	2 nd quarter of 2023
Expected date of award	October 2023
Scope of the call for Proposals	Participating States will launch a bi-/multi- call for research proposals under the PRIMA Initiative calls Section 3 for 2023. Such calls aim to promote research in PRIMA-related topics that could address the identified national funding gaps and to increase the use of evidence-based actions that may not have been addressed through the PRIMA calls under PRIMA Sections 1 and 2.
Implementation	
Type of Activity	Research Innovation Action (RIA) ✓ Innovation Action (IA) ✓
Start date of the activity	March/April 2023
Duration	Project Duration will be between 1-3 years
Funding institution	PRIMA Funding Agencies
Funding beneficiaries	PRIMA Participating Countries
Countries where research is conducted	PRIMA Participating Countries
Collaborating partner(s)	PRIMA Funding Agencies
Commitments	
Total national public commitment for the entire duration of the activity (in EUR)	MT – EUR 100 000. Other PRIMA PS can have a specific allocated budget
Alignment with PRIMA Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda	The thematic focus on Agricultural Research, Water Management, and Agro-Food Value Chain will be in alignment with the three thematic pillars of PRIMA
Website	www.mcst.gov.mt

6.4 MT.2023.2

Code	MT-2023-2
Theme:	Water management, Farming Systems, Agri-Food Value Chain
Activity title	PRIMA Training and Mobility Call
Activity description	
Abstract (publishable)	Through this action, entities based in Malta can establish collaborative links with fellow peers in Universities, Research Organisations and/or industries based in another PRIMA PS. The PRIMA Training and Mobility Call will support strategic visits, placements or other joint activities that may facilitate different partners to come together and potentially submit joint applications for PRIMA.
Rationale/Impact	<p>This action focuses on building research and innovation capacities through training and mobility activities. Such activities would empower researchers and R&I stakeholders through training, sharing best practices, knowledge transfer and networking, and establishing successful partner matches for future collaborations to propose and undertake joint R&I PRIMA projects.</p> <p>This will be achieved through a competitive and transparent process of selection.</p> <p>The foreseen main impacts will be to (but not limited to):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase awareness of the PRIMA Initiative. 2. Train researchers who are gaining expertise in the relevant thematic areas. 3. Facilitate meetings between researchers with common research interests. 4. Share best practices through research visits and workshops. 5. Transfer knowledge and encourage dissemination amongst entities from different PS through organising seminars and workshops. 6. Further support local researchers who have been unsuccessful in previous PRIMA Calls to find new partners and to widen their network further
Objectives	<p>The call aims to promote national and regional research and innovation in the thematic areas of PRIMA and encourage more participation in PRIMA through fostering international collaborations.</p> <p>This Call is foreseen to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widen the research network for Mediterranean researchers and practitioners operating in the fields of PRIMA. • Foster capacity-building of researchers/practitioners by learning through hands-on training and sharing best practices on water sustainability and land and food management. • Foster a culture for transnational research and high-quality research excellence outputs. • Provide access to research facilities

Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobility of researchers between Malta and other PRIMA PSs for training, workshops and research seminars. - Joint Research Actions in the PRIMA thematic areas between stakeholders in different PRIMA PS - Research outcomes – scientific papers, conference attendance and other dissemination efforts. - Technical Report at the end of the activity - Increase the possibility of establishing consortia for future proposals/submissions under Section 1 and Section 2 PRIMA Calls
Information on the eventual Call(s) for Proposals	
Title of the call for Proposals	TBA
Publication date (call 2022)	2 nd quarter of 2023
Deadline for applications	2 nd quarter of 2023
Expected date of award	3 rd quarter 2023
Scope of the call for Proposals	Malta will launch a call for training and mobility under the PRIMA Section 3 initiatives for 2023. The call aims to promote training and mobility activities associated with PRIMA-related topics that could address shortcomings associated with effective partner searching, unsuccessful partner collaborations due to the lack of in-person and on-site meetings, and limitations in the transfer and application of existing knowledge across PSs. Addressing such limitations can help increase the propensity for stronger project consortia composition.
Implementation	
Type of Activity	Training and Mobility Action (TMA): ✓ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobility ✓ - Training action ✓ - Joint Research Action ✓ - Research Seminar
Start date of the activity	2 nd quarter of 2023
Duration	Applicants would have the possibility to use the award within 6 months from the date of the award.
Funding institution	Malta Council for Science & Technology
Funding beneficiaries	Stakeholders in Malta
Countries where research is conducted	PRIMA Participating Countries
Collaborating partner(s)	Stakeholders in PRIMA Participating Countries
Commitments	
Total national public commitment for the entire	MT – EUR 25 000

duration of the activity (in EUR)	
Alignment with PRIMA Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda	This initiative aligns well with the Capacity Building cross-cutting activity described in Chapter 5 of the PRIMA SRIA, whereby PRIMA strives to enhance research capacity in Euro-Mediterranean countries through training programmes for researchers and entrepreneurs
Website	www.mcst.gov.mt

Preliminary version

6.5 TR.2023.1

Code	TR-2023-1
Theme:	Water Management, Farming Systems, Agri-Food Value Chain
Activity title	PRIMA Participating States Calls for Proposals supporting PRIMA
Activity description	
Abstract (publishable)	Through this action, bilateral/multilateral joint calls for proposals in PRIMA-related thematic areas may be set up between Turkey's funding agency TUBITAK and other PS funding agencies. Such an initiative aims to build the Research and Innovation capacities of the PS involved in the areas of Water, Food and Agriculture.
Rationale/Impact	<p>These calls focus on building research and innovation capacities and developing knowledge and common innovative solutions for integrated water provision and management in the Mediterranean region, making them more climate resilient, efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally and socially sustainable.</p> <p>This will be achieved through a competitive and transparent process of selection.</p> <p>The main impacts will be to (but not limited to these):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Successful projects will act as a springboard for consortia to apply for Section 1 and Section 2 PRIMA Calls 2) Increase awareness of the PRIMA Initiative 3) Further support local researchers who have been unsuccessful in previous PRIMA Calls 4) Encourage partnerships with other PRIMA PS to launch bi-lateral and multi-lateral calls to support the collaborative nature of PRIMA further
Objectives	<p>The general objective of the call is to promote national and regional research and innovation in the strategic thematic areas of PRIMA and to encourage more participation in PRIMA activities.</p> <p>This call will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generate new knowledge relevant to the PRIMA thematic areas • foster capacity-building through learning by doing and hands-on training • strengthen the link between evidence generation and policy-making in the PRIMA thematic areas • enhance experience exchange with researchers in the other PRIMA PS.
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bilateral R&I projects on Water Management, Agriculture and Agro-Food Value Chains - Mobility of researchers between the PRIMA PS - Research outcomes – scientific papers, attendance at conferences, participation in joint events between the PS and other dissemination efforts. - Project reporting during the interim and end of projects.

	- Increase the possibility of establishing consortia for future proposal submissions under Section 1 and Section 2 PRIMA Calls
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Preliminary version

Information on the eventual Call(s) for Proposals	
Title of the call for Proposals	Calls for Proposals for the Implementation of Projects under the thematic areas of PRIMA
Publication date (call 2023)	1 st quarter of 2023
Deadline for applications	2 nd quarter of 2023
Expected date of award	October 2023
Scope of the call for Proposals	Participating States will launch a bi-/multilateral call for research proposals under the PRIMA Initiative called Section 3 for 2023. The aim of such calls is to promote research in PRIMA-related topics that could address the identified national funding gaps and to increase the use of evidence-based actions that may not have been addressed through the PRIMA calls under PRIMA Sections 1 and 2.
Implementation	
Type of Activity	Research Innovation Action (RIA) ✓ Innovation Action (IA) ✓
Start date of the activity	March/April 2023
Duration	Project Duration will be between 1-3 years
Funding institution	PRIMA Funding Agencies
Funding beneficiaries	PRIMA Participating Countries
Countries where research is conducted	PRIMA Participating Countries
Collaborating partner(s)	PRIMA Funding Agencies
Commitments	
Total national public commitment for the entire duration of the activity (in EUR)	TR – Up to 59.740 EUR + Project Incentive Premium (max. 8.602,56 EUR) + Overhead (max. 10.753,20 EUR). Other PS can have a specific allocated budget.
Alignment with PRIMA Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda	The thematic focus on Agricultural Research, Water Management, and Agro-Food Value Chain will be in alignment with the three thematic pillars of PRIMA
Website	www.tubitak.gov.tr



Annual Work Plan 2023

Annual Work Plan 2023

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