



CALL TEXT AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Call: Section 1 – Food Value-chain 2023

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


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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 needs¹ 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

¹ 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>)

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 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 of the PRIMA Annual Work Plan 2023), consortia must include at least one independent legal entity established in any of the MPCs.²

Expected impact

- 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](#).

² 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

Contribution to SDGs

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

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 of the PRIMA Annual Work Plan 2023 for the list of countries eligible for funding.
Specific additional requirements for the calls 2023	<p><i>Due to the specific challenge of these topics, 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:</i></p> <p><i>"In addition to the minimum number of participants (3 legal entities) set out in the standard eligibility conditions (mentioned above), consortia must include at least one additional independent legal entity established in any of the MPC.</i></p> <p><i>So the eligibility rules can be read as follows:</i></p> <p>At least four legal entities established in at least three different countries considered as PRIMA Participating States, 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 -at least two must be established in third country/countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea (MPC): Algeria, Jordan, Israel, Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey." <p>Examples:</p> <p>Germany-Greece-Morocco-Turkey is eligible Germany-Greece-Morocco entity 1-Morocco entity 2 is eligible Germany entity 1-Germany entity 2-Greece-Morocco IS NOT ELIGIBLE, lack of the 4th partner from a MPC France-Algeria-Egypt is NOT ELIGIBLE, lack a 4th partner that can be from a MPC OR from a EU PRIMA PS</p>

Submission and evaluation procedure	<p>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.</p> <p>Successful applicants in the first step will be invited to the second step to submit a full proposal (maximum 50 pages).</p> <p>A timeline for submitting and evaluating applications can be found in Table 6 of the PRIMA Annual Work Plan 2023.</p>
Evaluation rules	<p>The award criteria, scoring, thresholds and weightings for IAs, listed in part 5.1.7 of the PRIMA Annual Work Plan 2023, will be used.</p>
Grant agreement	<p>PRIMA MGA (multi-beneficiary), based on Horizon 2020 MGA.</p>
Consortium agreement	<p>Participants in projects resulting from this call for Proposals must conclude a consortium agreement before the conclusion of the PRIMA grant agreement.</p>