



Terms of Reference (ToR) – Consultancy to Assess the Performance and Impact of the PRIMA Programme implementation in the period: 2018-2024



## BACKGROUND

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This consultancy aims to evaluate the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) effectiveness, efficiency, and impact as it approaches its second interim evaluation.

The Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) is an EU partnership supported by the EU under the H2020 Programme for Research and Innovation established by 19 Euro-Mediterranean Participant States according to the **co-ownership, co-funding, and mutual benefits** principle.

Its inception dates back to a joint decision ([PRIMA Decision \(EU\) 2017/1324](#)) of the European Parliament and the Council on July 4, 2017, with a planned duration spanning over ten years, from August 7, 2017, to December 31, 2028.

Critical foundational documents include the [impact assessment](#) conducted by the Commission in 2016, accompanying the document Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the participation of the Union PRIMA jointly undertaken by several Member States. The PRIMA Consortium formulated a long-term [Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda \(SRIA\)](#) in 2017, following extensive consultations with diverse stakeholders. This SRIA serves as the cornerstone of the program, delineating challenges at both regional and sub-regional levels, identifying research priorities, and aiming to enhance prosperity, well being, and stability in the Mediterranean Area.

The implementation of the PRIMA program falls under the purview of the PRIMA Foundation, operating through the Dedicated Implementation Structure (DIS), a legal entity under Spanish law, established in Barcelona in June 2017.

PRIMA has been executed through seven Annual Work Plans (2018 – 2024). Activities, including grant agreements for proposals selected for funding from the last Annual Work Plan calls, are slated to conclude in 2024, with implementation extending until 2027-2028.

Pursuant to *Article 14* of the PRIMA Decision, the European Commission with support of external experts, conducted an interim evaluation of the PRIMA program, presenting the findings the assessment in a [report](#) summarizing the main conclusions of the interim evaluation and includes the Commission's ensuing observations.

The evaluation conducted by EC was fed by information contained an [input report to the 1<sup>st</sup> interim evaluation prepared by PRIMA](#). The evaluation was also conducted taking into account a [study to assess the performance and impact of the PRIMA programme](#) conducted by external experts on behalf of PRIMA.

Following this evaluation, on June 28, 2023, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a minimal amendment of the PRIMA basic act ([Decision \(EU\) 2024/1167](#)), reflecting the Union's continued participation in PRIMA under Horizon Europe.

This amendment extends the funding of PRIMA for three more years (2025-2027) aligning this activity with the programme cycle under Horizon Europe.

As from 2025, Bulgaria joined PRIMA following the amended proposal), so 20 Countries participate in the EU partnership Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia, and Turkey (EU Member States and third countries associated to Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe) and Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Morocco (Southern Mediterranean countries not associated to Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe). Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Morocco signed bilateral international agreements with the EU in 2017-2018 to participate in PRIMA. These agreements are being revised and resigned for the 5 countries to continue participating in PRIMA from 2025 to 2027.

According to the Article 14 of the amended PRIMA Decision ([Decision \(EU\) 2024/1167](#)), the extension of PRIMA requires monitoring and evaluation in accordance with Horizon Europe-related provisions. Consequently, the Commission should carry out a second interim evaluation of PRIMA by 31 December 2025. The interim evaluation shall examine the success rates and the participation rates, including of the Southern Mediterranean Participating States, and PRIMA's fulfilment of its mission and objectives, and shall cover all its activities and evaluate its European added value, effectiveness, efficiency, including its openness and transparency, the relevance of the activities pursued, including in industry and by SMEs, non-governmental organisations and in civil society, and their consistency and complementarity with relevant regional, national and Union policies, including synergies with other parts of Horizon Europe, such as other partnerships,

missions, clusters and thematic or specific programmes. The evaluations shall take into account the views of representative asset of relevant stakeholders.

They shall include, where relevant, an assessment of the most effective policy intervention mode for any future action, as well as the relevance and coherence of any possible renewal of PRIMA, given the overall policy priorities and the research and innovation support landscape, including the positioning against other initiatives supported through Horizon Europe.

## OBJECTIVES

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The consultancy will assess PRIMA's performance and impact based on the following criteria

- a. Relevance:
- b. Coherence:
- c. Efficiency:
- d. Effectiveness:
- e. EU value added:
- f. Additionality
- g. Directionality
- h. International positioning and visibility
- i. Transparency and openness
- j. Phasing out preparedness

NB: At the interim evaluation stage, it is expected that the partnerships will not have a phasing-out strategy ready, but some information.

The assessment's report, which constitutes the output of this assignment, will be provided to the Commission to support *the second interim evaluation*.

Additionally, the assignment should review the funding mechanisms, grant awarding and management process delineating any specific constraints and make recommendations where necessary.

It should also provide recommendations to assess the Specific KPIs developed by the programme in response of the of the 1<sup>st</sup> interim evaluation recommendations as included in the [report FROM THE COMMISSION Interim Evaluation of the Partnership for Research on PRIMA](#)

## SCOPE OF WORK

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The consultant will:

- Review PRIMA's foundational and operational documents.
- Assess the program's achievements against its objectives in the period of implementation from jan 2018 to December 2024
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the monitoring framework and KPIs.
- Provide recommendations for the forthcoming interim evaluation by the European Commission.

The assessment of PRIMA performance must consider following aspects:

- the success rates and the participation rates, including of the Southern Mediterranean Participating States, PRIMA's fulfilment of its mission and objectives,
- evaluate its European added value, effectiveness, efficiency, including its openness and transparency, the relevance of the activities pursued, including in industry and by SMEs, non-governmental organisations and in civil society, and their consistency and complementarity with relevant regional, national and Union policies, including synergies with other parts of Horizon Europe, such as other partnerships, missions, clusters and thematic or specific programmes.

The evaluations shall take into account the views of representative set of relevant stakeholders.

The assessment will also cover the existing monitoring framework, including its key performance indicators (KPIs), to determine their effectiveness in tracking the fulfillment of PRIMA's objectives.

Consider the recommendations from the first interim evaluation report to evaluate the appropriateness of the KPIs. Additionally, provide suggestions for improving the KPIs to better align them with the program's goals and enhance their utility in monitoring progress.

## DELIVERABLES

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A comprehensive report that includes:

- Evaluation of PRIMA's performance from 2018 to 2024.
- Recommendations for future improvements.
- Detailed analysis for each evaluation criterion: PRIMA's effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance, and EU added value, alongside additional criteria relevant to partnerships responding to the questions indicated herebelow.

The report should be structured as follow:

### 0. **Executive summary**

1. **Key definitions, acronyms and glossary** (not counted in the number of pages)
2. **Introduction**, including the purpose and scope of the evaluation and a one-paragraph description of methodology (in every version, please specify the updated number of interviews conducted and documents reviewed; the evaluation questions and detailed methodology should be in an annex)
3. **Background to the initiative** (Its predecessor in Horizon 2020, the partnership launch date and legal base, intervention logic and baseline –)
4. **Implementation state of play** (overview of calls for proposals and projects, number of participants broken down by organisation type and Member State and any associated country and third countries).
5. **Findings** (please identify challenges, drivers and barriers wherever relevant, especially for efficiency, effectiveness, etc.):

For each criteria the evaluation must cover the following questions:

- a. **Relevance:** *To what extent have the objectives of the partnership been, and are still relevant regarding the challenges and needs addressed in this area by the Framework Programme? How flexible the partnership proved to be, in updating the Strategic Research Innovation Agenda, or equivalent strategic documents, adjusting objectives, activities and resources to changing market and/or policy needs?*
- b. **Coherence:** *How is the level of coherence between this partnership and the other partnerships and the Framework Programme activities in this area? Is this partnership more effective in achieving synergies, compared to other modalities of the programme?*
- c. **Efficiency:** *How cost-effective has this partnership been?*
- d. **Effectiveness:** *To what extent has this partnership achieved its objectives and contributed to achieving the objectives of the Framework Programme in this area? Has the gender dimension been integrated in R&I content and how (Horizon Europe regulation requirement)?*
- e. **EU value added:** *What is the value resulting from this partnership that is additional to the value that could result from interventions carried out at regional or national level?*
- f. **Additionality**  
*How much private and/or public R&I contributions has been mobilised on EU priorities thanks to this partnership? What is the partnership's budget leverage factor, in mobilising additional resources, on top of financial contribution from partners? How does the partnership facilitates the creation and expansion of R&I networks that bring together relevant and competent actors from across Europe, thus contributing to the realisation of the ERA?*
- g. **Directionality**

*What is the progress towards the strategic vision of the European Partnership? Does the partnership clearly demonstrate progress in the delivery of results for the EU and its citizens,*

*notably global challenges and competitiveness, which cannot be achieved by traditional calls alone?*

h. International positioning and visibility

*To what extent is the partnership acting as global ambassador for the European R&I system/establish global relevance/ achieve scientific and technological reputation in the international context/ serve as hubs for international cooperation, where appropriate? What is the level of international cooperation at partnership and project level and how does this result in visibility for the European Partnership?*

i. Transparency and openness

*How open is the partnership to new participants? Are there procedures / mechanisms in place to expand the partnership to involve new members at partnership and project level, as well as gradually engage a broader set of stakeholders across Europe? What is the extent of gender balance in the governance structures of the partnership?*

*Are there open and transparent processes for consulting all relevant stakeholders and constituent entities in the identification of priorities? What is the level of openness in use of research results? To what extent is the partnership (notably with industry participation) accessible for SMEs?*

Include an overview of formal participants in the partnership. Analysis of sectors and stakeholders covered by the partnership, and identification of any gaps.

Phasing out preparedness *What are the foreseen measures and conditions set for the orderly phasing-out of the Partnership from the Framework Programme funding? Are these measures appropriate with regards to a possible phasing-out (or renewal) of the partnership? **NB:** At the interim evaluation stage, it is expected that most partnerships will not have a **phasing-out** strategy ready, but any updated information on this is required.*

Also consider any *renewal strategies followed by the partnerships,*

6. **Conclusions**

7. **Lessons learned and suggestions for improvement**

8. **Annexes** – from the ToR: “Annexes will include details on all methodologies used, and on the findings from stakeholder consultation (including interviews and surveys to governing bodies i.e. Scientific Advisory Committee, Board of Trustees selected members, PRIMA Secretariat) and selected beneficiaries, from the full set of data collection tools applied.

Annexes will also include the main qualitative and quantitative data collected, the underlying calculations, analysis models.

Graphical material used should be in editable formats, such as Microsoft Office. Other software can be used as long as reproducible codes are provided.

## **TIMING**

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The assignment should commence in July and be concluded by December 2024

## **BUDGET**

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The maximum value of the contract: 38.000 € (VAT not included).

## **QUALIFICATIONS OF THE EVALUATORS**

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The evaluators must have the appropriate international experience and specific expertise necessary to conduct this assignment.

PRIMA will consider applications by consultants who have the necessary expertise to evaluate all aspects of the programme.

The evaluators must have a proven track record of programme evaluation, including expertise in organisational management and scientific output evaluation.

## PRESENTATION & REQUIRED CONTENT FOR PROPOSALS

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Proposals shall be submitted via email to the following addresses:

[octavi.quintana@prima-med.org](mailto:octavi.quintana@prima-med.org), [antonella.autino@prima-med.org](mailto:antonella.autino@prima-med.org) and [julia.rebes@prima-med.org](mailto:julia.rebes@prima-med.org)

### **Deadline: 7<sup>th</sup> June (17.00 CET)**

The body of the email must indicate:

- Title of the contract: "Consultancy to assess the performance and impact of the PRIMA Programme 2018-2024"
- Company details: Address, telephone, e-mail and contact person for communications and relations that generally derive from this procedure. The maximum term of presentation is June 30, 2024.

#### 1.1. Presentation of proposals

Proposals must be written in English and signed by the authorized representative of the company. All documentation must be submitted in digital format (PDF format).

Technical offers submitted must have a limited length: they may not exceed 10 DIN-A4 pages, using the Arial 11 font and single line spacing. Where applicable, PRIMA reserves the right to request additional clarifications or information regarding the technical offer submitted.

#### 1.2. Content for proposals

All proposals must include a list, in a separate page, stating the included documents in numerical order and following the following structure:

1.2.1. Economic Offer: It must be signed by the person representing the company and must in any case follow the model below:

*"The undersigned Mr/Mrs [●], with ID [●], in the name and on behalf of the company [●], with VAT registration number [●], acting in its capacity of [●], having knowledge of the bid for the contracting of the service of "Consultancy to assess the performance and impact of the PRIMA Programme", I declare hereby my interest to participate in the mentioned tender procedure, undertaking to implement the above referred contract for a **total price of**.....**EUROS** (not inclusive of Value Added Tax, VAT), in strict compliance with the Tender Terms of Reference that I also declare to know and accept in their entirety.*

*Sign: [...]*

*Date:[...]"*

Proposals will be excluded when:

- they are not signed
- they are incomplete
- they present a higher price than the maximum budget indicated on the point 6

The offered price will include all the necessary expenses, including travel expenses, if needed, to ensure a correct execution of the Contract.

1.2.2. Technical Offer: The technical proposal will define a project plan and organization



of the service, explaining how the service will be designed, planned and developed according to the scope, definition and execution specifications defined previously.

1.2.3. **Code of Conduct:** The person representing the company must sign this document to ensure alignment with the fundamental ethical principles of PRIMA.

Proposals should describe -among others- the following aspects:

- Definition and planning of the service, both strategy and execution.
- Performance of the service:
  - Team Work
  - Service organisation
  - Coordination of tasks
- Proposal for reports, deliverables and meetings with a detailed calendar.

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## EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

At the end of the period for the receipt of proposals, the Evaluation Committee constituted by PRIMA will proceed with an internal and non-public act to the examination and assessment of the proposals.

The announcement of the company selected for the execution of the service will be communicate via email directly.

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## PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

Any personal data generated in connection with this call for tenders will be handled in compliance with [PRIMA's privacy policy](#) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679.

