



# Guidelines for Applicants

## PRIMA Call-2024- Section 2 funded by Participant States (Two-Stage Submission)

### Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area

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and Innovation



**DISCLAIMER**

This document was prepared by PRIMA-IS to provide guidance to applicants, the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains. In case of discrepancies between this document and the AWP 2024 the latter legally prevails.

## Glossary

AC: Associated Countries.

AWP: Annual Work Plan.

CA: Consortium Agreement.

CV: Curriculum Vitae.

DMP: Data Management Plan.

ESR: Evaluation Summary Report.

ESS: Electronic Submission System.

EU: European Union.

GA: Grant Agreement.

IPR: Intellectual Property Right.

KPI: Key Performance Indicators.

MPC: Mediterranean Partner Countries.

NCP: National Contact Point.

OCT: Overseas Countries and Territories

PI: Principal Investigator.

PRIMA-IS: PRIMA – Implementation Structure.

PS: Participating State.

RIA: Research and Innovation Activities, based on national rules<sup>1</sup>

RfP: Rules for Participation

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal.

SMEs: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

SRIA: Scientific Research and Innovation Agenda.

TC: Third Countries.

TRL: Technology Readiness Level.

UfMS: Union for Mediterranean Secretariat.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 analogous to 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.

**SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

**Stage 1 Pre-proposals**  
**Deadline for Submission 04 April, 2024**  
**(17:00h CET)**

**Documents for Stage-1:**

- Administrative and financial data, the full cost and requested amount per partner (to be filled directly on the ESS)*
- PART I: Administrative data (template to be uploaded as pdf on the ESS)*
  - Scientific document- pre proposal (Part II, to be uploaded as pdf on the ESS)*

**Stage 2 Full proposals**  
**Deadline for Submission 26 September, 2024**  
**(17:00h CET)**

**Documents for stage 2:**

- Administrative and financial data, the full cost and requested amount per partner (to be checked directly on the ESS)*
- PART I: Administrative data (template to be uploaded as pdf on the ESS, (as an annex))*
- PART II: Detailed Scientific document – full proposal (template to be uploaded as pdf on the ESS)*
- Detailed budget (template to be uploaded as an Excel file in the ESS)*

One month before the deadline for submission, the Electronic Submission System link will be announced on the PRIMA web page in the section corresponding to the call.

Download the templates from [www.prima-med.org](http://www.prima-med.org)

Contents

Glossary 2

I. Activities funded under Section 2 5

II. Section 2 Call Overview 6

III. Before the Submission of a Proposal 7

IV. Preparing a Proposal 8

V. List of Countries Eligible for Funding 10

VI. Standard of admissibility and related requirements 12

VII. Standard eligibility conditions 13

VIII. Evaluation rules 14

IX. Communication of evaluation results 17

X. Conditions related to open access to research data 18

XI. Key Performance Indicators and Sustainable Development Goals 18

XII. Project Monitoring and Reporting for Funded Projects 19

XIII. Specific additional information and relations between the beneficiaries and their funding bodies 19

XIV. Call Secretariat – PRIMA-IS 20

XV. National Contact Points 20

XVI. Use of the Electronic Submission System 20

Annexes

A1. Timeline of the call.....21

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

The calls will follow a two-stage evaluation procedure.

For the first stage, a short Scientific pre-proposal (10 pages), as well as Part I for administrative and financial data, must be submitted to the Electronic Submission System by **the first deadline (04 April, 2024, 17:00h CET)**.

Guidance about the Electronic Submission System is provided in “Electronic Submission System Handbook”. **The link to the electronic submission system will be announced ONE MONTH before the submission deadline on the PRIMA web page, in the section corresponding to the call.**

Please note that when these guidelines refer to “proposal”, this means that the conditions apply to both pre-proposal (First Stage) and full proposal (Second Stage).

The Annual Work Plan 2024 (AWP2024) contains the full description of the actions; please refer to this document to have more detailed information on participation.

**AS THIS CALL IS FUNDED BY THE NATIONAL FUNDING BODIES, PLEASE READ CAREFULLY THE NATIONAL REGULATIONS OF YOUR COUNTRY (available on the PRIMA website) TO VERIFY YOUR ELIGIBILITY. PRIMA strongly recommends all applicants to communicate with their national funding agencies to check their national regulations. You can find all their contacts on the PRIMA official website.**

## I. Activities funded under Section 2

### Description of the Activities: Research and Innovation Activities (RIA)<sup>2</sup>

Activities primarily aim to establish new knowledge and/or to explore the feasibility of a new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution. For this purpose, projects 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 in a near to operational environment.

All 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 with a view to pooling the results to contribute to the achievement of a set of common, well-defined project objectives.

### Funding Level

<sup>2</sup> 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 analogous to 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.

The level of funding and the list of eligible costs are given in the national regulations. Each applicant has to comply with the requirements stated in their own national regulations. A contact point established in each country and who can be contacted directly by the applicant belonging to the same country, will inform the applicants about the rules (list of NCPs can be found: <http://prima-med.org/calls-for-proposals/ncps/>).

## II. Section 2 Call Overview

The Section 2 Call 2024 will focus on a unique call for RIA, addressing the following topics:

### 1 Thematic Area 1-Water Management in the Nexus:

Topic 2.1.1-2024 (RIA<sup>3</sup>) Effective water accounting approaches under crisis conditions: climate change and external shocks.

### 2 Thematic Area 2-Farming Systems in the Nexus:

Topic 2.2.1 (RIA<sup>3</sup>) Revitalizing agroforestry practices for sustainable land use and climate resilience in the Mediterranean Region.

### 3 Thematic Area 3-Food Value Chain:

Topic 2.3.1-2024 (RIA<sup>3</sup>) Leveraging urban and local food systems for sustainable food systems transformation.

The Section 2 Call will be launched in a two-stage process. PRIMA-Secretariat (PRIMA-IS) will be responsible for evaluation of proposals, which will be conducted with analogous rules of H2020 rules in a peer review process with a panel that will rank the proposals.

Admissibility and Eligibility of proposals will be first checked by the PRIMA-IS having regard to the eligibility criteria set forth in the PRIMA Decision. After the eligibility check done by PRIMA-IS, a second eligibility check will be performed by the national funding bodies, aimed at the verification of eligibility for funding.

Only proposals that are considered eligible both by PRIMA-IS and by the national funding bodies will enter into the evaluation process. At the end of the evaluation of each stage, the evaluation panel will

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<sup>3</sup>: Please note that the acronym RIA is used for Section 2. 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](#).

produce a unique ranking list in order to guarantee that high ranked projects will be funded. In the event that one or more projects cannot be funded (in case that a funding body runs out of budget), the projects following directly in the ranking may be selected.

To receive the funds, the beneficiaries will have to sign a grant agreement directly with their national funding bodies, thus, to ensure compliance of the beneficiary with the national regulations a second eligibility check will be performed by the national funding bodies, at the end of each submission stage.

PRIMA Section 2 call will address the topics described above and the cross-cutting issues among them. A full description of the topics is available in the "Call text and Supporting Information" on the PRIMA website. Research projects can address issues that are cross cutting between two topics as long as they are both eligible for funding by the partner countries. PRIMA Section 2 call will fund collaborative research projects aiming at achieving clear impacts and being policy driven.

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

Projects must deliver tangible outputs and enhance technological and social innovation, depending on the research question addressed. The projects could include the use of innovative technologies, such as smart digital technologies, space data and related data and technologies. When explicitly allowed by the national regulations of the funding bodies, 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.

### III. Before the Submission of a Proposal

There are important steps to get prepared before starting the preparation of the proposal. They are as follows:

- Carefully read the text of the call and check the general eligibility conditions (e.g. minimum number of required partners or their place of establishment) and the national regulations applying to your consortium (available on the PRIMA website).
- Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact PRIMA Officers, published on PRIMA website, as well as PRIMA National Contact Points (NCPs) (<http://prima-med.org/calls-for-proposals/ncps/>), to receive more information and guidance on PRIMA calls.
- Get familiar with the standard administrative and technical documentation to fill in. These templates are available on the PRIMA website (reference documents section) to allow an early preparation of the proposal. Please note that a different template is used for the pre proposal and full proposal stage with different information.
- The PRIMA website (<http://prima-med.org/>) features a "find partners tool" which allows applicants to search for potential partners.
- Each consortium is formed by several teams, each one with a Principal Investigator (PI), who is the leader of the team, lab or institution. One of these PIs shall be nominated as coordinator of the project, whose responsibilities during the submission and the evaluation phase are:
  - Ensure that all the consortium members, comparing to their national funding agency regulations, are eligible;

- Submit the pre proposal and full proposal on behalf of the consortium;
  - Be the single point of contact between the PRIMA-IS and the consortium partners.
- 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.

#### IV. Preparing a Proposal

The proposal must be created by the Project Coordinator and consists of two main parts: Part I: the **administrative & financial data** (to be filled directly on the ESS, and uploaded as well using Part I template), and Part II: the **scientific document** (Part II), which is the description of the planned project. The project budget breakdown (excel table) is needed only during the Second Stage. All templates are available on <http://prima-med.org/>.

The applied page limits are:

- Stage-1, for the scientific document (Part II): max 10 pages, all sections included;

Stage-2, for the scientific document (Part II): max 50 pages, all sections, from 1-5, included;

Proposals, all Annexes and any additional documents **must be written in English**, in a legible font. Further guidance on the use of fonts, margins and other page formatting will be included in the pre-proposal and full proposal templates available on the PRIMA website.

The work described in the proposal must correspond to the PRIMA Call for Section 2. The proposal has to meet all eligibility and admissibility conditions described in these guidelines. Proposals that do not comply with such requirements will be considered ineligible or not admissible.

**Between Stage-1 and Stage-2, NO MODIFICATIONS are allowed in the consortium composition (Organizations, Coordinator and PIs), budget and scientific objectives.**

During the First Stage, and on the online submission system, for each partner, the project coordinator must indicate the total cost of the whole project and each partner's requested amount to their national funding body (total cost = amount requested + own funding). Please ensure that the total value of your requested budget respects the national regulations. Not all costs are eligible for all countries. A detailed explanation of which costs are eligible and which are not eligible can be found in the national regulations on PRIMA website. Please, read these carefully. A detailed budget will be required for the Second stage.

Applications, including all required forms and annexes, must be received by the PRIMA-IS, only via the electronic submission system, **before each stage deadline** as stated in this document. Therefore, it is strongly recommended not to wait until the last moment to submit your proposal. **Proposals submitted after the deadline are not eligible** for evaluation and will be automatically rejected. No extenuating circumstances will be taken into consideration.

It is possible for the consortium to withdraw an already submitted proposal at any time before the deadline, or even during the review process. Correcting or revising of proposals is only possible before the deadline. PRIMA will use the latest version of the proposal submitted by the deadline for review.



ONLY consortia whose pre-proposals are selected by PRIMA-IS (based on the evaluation panel's ranking list, please refer to Section VIII of these guidelines for more information on the evaluation process), will be invited to submit a full proposal (Stage-2). The submission of a pre-proposal is mandatory.

Proposals submitted by coordinators will be opened and authenticated by the PRIMA-IS, which will perform the admissibility and eligibility check. No clarification or integration requests will be accepted after the call deadline. If the admissibility and eligibility criteria are met, the proposal will be then sent to evaluators.

**Table 1. Main steps for the preparation and submission of a proposal**

Main steps for the preparation and submission of a proposal	
<b>1</b>	Consortium composition and appointment of the coordinator
<b>2</b>	Verification of the eligibility conditions for the partners
<b>3</b>	Pre-proposal writing (check the evaluation criteria, fill in the appropriate forms)
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Stage-1 'Pre-proposal Submission'</b> by the Project Coordinator with the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Administrative and financial data (names of the partners, contact details, institutions....). Information to be filled in online. See ESS Handbook for details. Budget: Total cost per partner and requested amount per partner, to be filled online.</li> <li>✓ Administrative Data (Part I, names of the partners, contact details, institutions, ethical issues....). PDF to be uploaded on the ESS.</li> <li>✓ A Detailed Scientific Document (PART II, PDF to be uploaded on the ESS).</li> </ul> <p>Note that for <b>Stage-2 'Full Proposal'</b>, the Project Coordinator will have to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Administrative data (Part I, names of the partners, contact details, institutions, ethical issues....). PDF to be uploaded on the ESS.</li> <li>✓ A Detailed Scientific Document (Part II, PDF to be uploaded on the ESS). CVs of the PIs including all the information listed in Section V of these guidelines (point 3) must be integrated in Part II.</li> <li>✓ A detailed budget table (Excel file to be uploaded on the ESS).</li> </ul> <p>The PI is the team leader= One person per team, lab or institution.</p>



## V. List of Countries Eligible for Funding

Legal entities established in the following PRIMA Participating States<sup>4</sup> will, in general, be eligible to receive funding through PRIMA grants:

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 States<sup>5</sup>:

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

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.

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

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

All participants with own 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 to the projects (task(s), participation to 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 the eligibility check done by PRIMA-IS, a second eligibility check will be performed by the national funding bodies, aimed at the verification of eligibility for funding.<sup>6</sup>

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 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.

For the eligibility for funding, applicants should refer to the national regulations and contact their national funding bodies. (NCP)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> 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/>).

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> Please refer to the National Regulations available in the PRIMA website.

Please refer to the table below, which presents indicative financial commitments of Participating States with respect to the call covered by Section 2. The latest information on the PRIMA PS can be found on PRIMA webpage: <http://http://prima-med.org//>

PRIMA Participating State	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
Israel	MOST	500 000	500 000
Italy	MUR	7 000 000	7 000 000
Jordan	HCST	424 000	424 000
Lebanon	CNRS-L	61 000	61 000
Luxembourg	FNR	400 000	400 000
Malta	MCST	500 000	500 000
Morocco	MESRSFC	1 000 000	1 000 000
Portugal	FCT	1 035 000	1 035 000
Slovenia	ARSS	170 000	170 000
Spain	AEI	3 000 000	4 250 000
	CDTI	1 250 000	
Tunisia	MESRS	1 500 000	1 500 000

Turkey	TUBITAK	1 000 000	1 000 000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>32 890 000</b>	<b>32 890 000</b>

Please note that if you are submitting a proposal that is cross cutting between two topics, you have to declare it in the submission website by ticking the two relevant topics. To be eligible, the two topics selected must be funded by all the funding bodies involved.

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

IMPORTANT NOTE<sup>8</sup>: The financial contributions from PRIMA PS for AWP 2024 are provided based on a formal commitment letter signed yearly by the competent authorities of the PRIMA Funding Agencies involved.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Please be advised that within the scope of the 2024 Section 2 Multi Topic Call, applicants from Greece will not be funded by GSRI. They can only take part in this Call as partners provided that they enter with their own funding. They cannot take part as coordinators. They can; however, receive funding and take part as coordinators within the scope of Section 1 Calls.

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<sup>8</sup> Changes were made regarding Greece's, Morocco's and Portugal's commitments to the 2024 Section 2 PRIMA Calls, after the approval of the PRIMA AWP2024. For this reason, the table indicated here differs slightly from the one in the AWP2024.

## VI. Standard of admissibility and related requirements

1. Proposals must comply with the admissibility requirements set out in this sub-section, unless they are 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 for the exploitation and dissemination of the results. The draft plan is **not required at the first stage**.

2. In addition to the above admissibility requirements, page limits will apply to parts of proposals. The limit for a **Stage-1 'Pre-Proposal'** is **10 pages (THIS APPLIES ONLY TO THE SCIENTIFIC Document, Part II)**, while the limit for a **Stage-2 'Full Proposal'** is **50 pages (THIS APPLIES ONLY TO THE SCIENTIFIC Document, Part II)**.

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

We strongly encourage you to write your pre or full proposal in a concise and precise way (please bear in mind that the length of the proposal is not considered as a guarantee of quality and evaluators appreciate receiving precise and clear documentation).

Proposals must be written in a legible font. Further guidance on acceptable fonts, margins and other page formatting will be included in the proposal templates. The structure of proposals must correspond to the requirements specified under each section of the proposal template. Applicants are requested to use the templates provided by PRIMA that can be downloaded from the PRIMA website under the relevant call section.

3. The following **supporting documents** will be required to determine the operational capacity for grant proposals (for Stage-2 only, as integral part under Section 4 of the Part II 'Full Proposal', count toward the max page limit):

- 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;
- 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;
- A list of up to five relevant previous projects or activities, connected to the subject of this proposal;
- A description of any significant infrastructure and/or any major items of technical equipment, relevant to the proposed work;
- 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).

This scrutiny will be carried out by the evaluators during the evaluation process under the selection criteria, in particular the award criterion 'Quality and efficiency of the implementation'.

## VII. Standard eligibility conditions

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

Furthermore, proposals must comply with the eligibility conditions set out in this Annex, unless they are 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 PS<sup>9</sup>;
- (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 below;
- (d) It complies with PRIMA PS National Regulations.

Type of Action	Eligibility conditions for participation,
Research & Innovation Action (RIA)	<p><b>At least three legal</b> entities established in three different countries considered as Participating States as defined in point 5.2.1 of <b>AWP 2024</b> by the submission deadline under the relevant call , out of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At least one must be established in a EU Member State or a third country associated to Horizon 2020 and not being a MPC<sup>10</sup>: and</li> <li>- At least one must be established in a third country bordering the Mediterranean Sea (MPC)</li> </ul> <p>All three legal entities must be independent of each other.</p>

## SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE CALLS 2024

*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:*

*"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.*

*So the eligibility rules can be read as follows:*

At least four legal entities established in at least three different countries considered as PRIMA Participating States, out of which:

-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."

Examples:

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 4<sup>th</sup> partner from a MPC

France-Algeria-Egypt is NOT ELIGIBLE, lack a 4<sup>th</sup> partner that can be from a MPC OR from a EU PRIMA PS

<sup>9</sup> This measure is proportionate with regard to achieving PRIMA objectives and is justified for protecting the Union's financial interests. It ensures that PRIMA implements its common research and innovation agenda addressing the common challenges in the Mediterranean Area while strengthening the partnership with European Neighborhood countries.

<sup>10</sup> These countries include Croatia, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain.

For the Section 2 call, after the eligibility check done by PRIMA-IS, a second eligibility check will be performed by the national funding bodies, aimed at the verification of eligibility for funding. In this context proposals that are considered eligible for participation by PRIMA-IS (at the consortium level) will enter into the evaluation process.

For funding rules, in particular the criteria for eligibility for funding of their participation in the activities following transnational call organized by PRIMA-IS, applicants should refer to the national funding rules and if necessary, contact their national funding bodies.

The national regulations mention the eligible structures or entities that are allowed to apply (for example, some funding bodies can fund private entities and others cannot). Each funding body establishes its own national regulations that provide to the applicants the topics that are funded under the call 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 others cannot). Therefore before applying to the call of the section 2, applicants must verify their own national eligibility by reading carefully the national regulations and by contacting the national contact point appointed for this task (the list of the national contact points is included in <http://prima-med.org/calls-for-proposals/ncps/>).

**Between Stage-1 and Stage-2, NO MODIFICATIONS are allowed in the consortium composition (Organizations, Coordinator and PIs), budget and scientific objectives.**

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

For Section 2, the PI cannot be a coordinator in both Section 1 & Section 2 of the same year, but can be a partner in other proposals in both Sections, with an eligibility condition that proposals must be different in terms of objectives, methodology and consortium composition.

For section 1, the PI can submit more than one proposal as coordinator but in case that more than one proposal is selected for funding, the coordinator will have to choose one project to be funded and withdraw the others (one funding per year). The PI can be partner in other projects.

## **VIII. Evaluation rules**

### **-Selection Criteria**

1. *Financial Capacity: In line with the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 and the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation No 1290/2013. For grants, coordinators will be invited – at the proposal stage – to complete a self-assessment using an on-line tool:*

[https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/grants/applying-for-funding/register-an-organisation/financial-capacity-check\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/grants/applying-for-funding/register-an-organisation/financial-capacity-check_en.htm)

2. *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).*

### **-Award criteria, scores and weighting**



1. Proposals will be evaluated by experts, on the basis of the award criteria ‘Excellence’, ‘Impact’ and ‘Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation’ (see Article 15 of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation No 1290/2013).

The aspects to be considered are set out in the table below, unless stated otherwise in the call conditions:

**Table 3. Aspects to be considered in the evaluation.**

<b>Type of Action</b>	<b>Excellence*</b> The following aspects will be taken into account, to the extent that the proposed work corresponds to the topic description in the work plan.	<b>Impact*</b> The following aspects will be taken into account:	<b>Quality and efficiency of the implementation (only for Stage 2)</b> The following aspects will be taken into account:
<b>Research &amp; Innovation Activities (RIAs)</b>	<p><b>Fit with the scope and objectives of the PRIMA programme and the call topic description;</b></p> <p><b>Clarity and pertinence of the objectives;</b></p> <p><b>Soundness of the concept and credibility of the proposed approach/methodology;</b></p> <p><b>Fit with the scope and objectives of the PRIMA programme and the call topic description;</b></p> <p><b>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)</b></p> <p><b>Appropriate consideration of interdisciplinary approaches and, where relevant, use of stakeholder knowledge and gender dimension in research and innovation content.</b></p>	<p><b>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.</b></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: -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 stage 1 evaluations, only aspects in bold will be considered.**

#### **-Scoring and weighting:**

- Unless otherwise specified in the call conditions:
- Evaluation scores will be awarded for the criteria, and 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 the evaluation of First Stage proposals under a two-stage submission procedure, only the criteria ‘Excellence’ and ‘Impact’ will be evaluated. 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 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 budget. In any case, not less than two and a half times the available budget.

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

**Table 4. Score description for the evaluation criteria.**

Score description for the evaluation criteria (half point scores may be given)		
0	<b>Weak</b>	The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.
1	<b>Poor</b>	The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses
2	<b>Fair</b>	While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses.
3	<b>Good</b>	The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary.
4	<b>Very Good</b>	The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible.
5	<b>Excellent</b>	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

#### **Evaluation procedure**

- ***Individual Evaluation:*** Each eligible proposal is evaluated remotely by at least three expert evaluators (see Article 15 of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation no. 1290/2013), who carry out a technical evaluation on the basis of 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. In a consensual manner, the panel review will recommend one ranked list for the proposals under evaluation, following the scoring systems indicated above and the discussion of the panel. They will prepare an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) for each proposal, which shows the outcome of the evaluation of the project proposal.
- Project funding decision will be taken based on this ranking list. The panel configuration allows evaluators to have an overview of all eligible proposals, not just the one they have evaluated, which enables them to decide fairly when ranking the proposals.
- In case of disagreement or in case of project proposals with the same score, the panel shall determine the priority order for proposals described in the section below.

**Priority order for proposals with the same score:**

The following method will be applied (except for the pre-proposal stage, where proposals having the same score are kept together and no prioritization is made).

If necessary, the panel will determine a priority order for proposals, which have been awarded the **same score** within a ranked list. Whether or not such a prioritization is carried out will depend on the available budget or other conditions set out in the call text. The following approach will be applied successively for every group of ex aequo proposals requiring prioritization, 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 prioritized 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 prioritization will be based on the following factors: number of MPCs partners, 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) If a distinction still cannot be made, 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 Horizon 2020 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 aequos in the group.

At the end of the panel meeting, the panel will recommend one ranking list for the proposals under evaluation, following the scoring systems indicated above.

## IX. Communication of evaluation results

In line with Article 6(10)(c) of the PRIMA Decision, the proposals will be ranked according to evaluation results. The selection of proposals to be funded will be made by PRIMA-IS based on this ranking. However, 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. In the event that one or more projects cannot be funded by the PS, PRIMA-IS may decide to select for funding the projects directly following them in the ranking list(s).

Coordinators whose pre-proposal has been rejected will receive an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) at the end of the first stage, showing the results of the evaluation.

Proposal coordinators receive an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR), showing the results of the evaluation for a given proposal. In the ESR, the overall scores will be provided. For proposals that successfully pass the first stage of two-stage calls, common feedback is provided to all coordinators, but the first stage ESR is only sent after the second stage evaluation. Applicants whose proposal is awarded funding will receive a formal communication informing them that the grant preparation phase can start. A positive result **does not constitute a confirmed offer of a grant**.

### Information on the means of redress

You may request an evaluation review on the procedural aspects of the evaluation. This procedure is intended for applicants who believe that the evaluation of their proposal has not been carried out in accordance with the procedures set out in the Annual Work Plan. **This procedure covers only the procedural aspects of the evaluation, and not the merits of the proposal.**

The full procedure is available at the following link:

<http://prima-med.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/PRIMA-Appeals-procedure.pdf>

## **X. Conditions related to open access to research data**

Participants must be engaged in research data sharing, this means that beneficiaries should 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).

Projects can "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

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

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

Further information on open access to research data is available on the EU portal : [https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/open-access-data-management/open-access\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/open-access-data-management/open-access_en.htm)

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.

## **XI. Key Performance Indicators and Sustainable Development Goals**

PRIMA programme will be implemented in compliance with the objectives and provisions set out in the Decision (EU) 2017/1324 and will be based on the priorities described in the PRIMA Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA).

For the proper evaluation and monitoring of the projects, consortia must consider in their proposal how and to which extent it will contribute to the targeted research and innovation objectives of the PRIMA programme and to its overall expected impacts.

For this purpose, proposals should clearly define a series of Key Performance Indicators-KPI (that can be the one listed in the call text or that can be tailored for the proposal) that will allow the evaluation

and measurement of the progress of the project and its impact. The proposals are also requested to identify Sustainable Development Goals-SDGs and explain how the project will contribute to reach the objectives of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

## XII. Project Monitoring and Reporting for Funded Projects

In addition to the specific requirements of the funding bodies, project coordinators will be required to provide a scientific and financial **mid-term report by Month 18 and a final report by Month 36 to PRIMA IS, or Month 48 for some projects**. All project partners will have to deliver input for these reports. In addition, it will be expected to include evidence of impact in these mid-term and final reports (see the list of Key Performance Indicators in annex 2).

Detailed information on the reporting and monitoring procedures as well as templates will be provided to the coordinators of the funded projects in due course on the PRIMA website.

## XIII. Specific additional information and relations between the beneficiaries and their 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 applying 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 funding of the project.

### 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:

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

There is no template provided by the funding bodies for the consortium agreement.

### The Project Coordinator

Each Consortium need 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 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 shall 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 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.

#### **XIV. Call Secretariat – PRIMA-IS**

The Call Secretariat located on the **PRIMA-IS**, will provide administrative support to applicants regarding the call, call documents and procedures.

##### **Project Officer:**

For Section 2 Call Topics:

Nur Eda Demir

E-mail: [eda.demir@prima-med.org](mailto:eda.demir@prima-med.org)

Marco Orlando

Email: [marco.orlando@prima-med.org](mailto:marco.orlando@prima-med.org)

**Disclaimer: Kindly refrain from forwarding identical inquiries to each officer through distinct emails. Feel free to communicate your message to either one of them or to both parties in a consolidated email.**

#### **XV. National Contact Points**

Besides the Call Secretariat, each country has nominated representatives at national level as National Contact Point (NCP). These representatives give support to the applicants and are the primary points of contact for all general matters related to the calls, and can act as a link between PRIMA and the coordinator of the project.

A list of the National Contact Point list is provided, as well on PRIMA website (<http://prima-med.org/calls-for-proposals/ncps/>).

#### **XVI. Use of the Electronic Submission System**

The proposal submission occurs online via Electronic Submission System. It is the duty of the Project Coordinator to enter the data online. Please READ CAREFULLY THE ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION SYSTEM HANDBOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION. Available on the PRIMA website.

The ESS will ask for the following information:

- Project Title;
- Project Acronym;
- Project duration;
- Topic;
- Keywords. You can select predetermined keywords for main topic selected or add any new keyword;
- Abstract;
- Documents. You can upload the required documents (Scientific document, budget table, in PDF or EXCEL files). Max allowed file size: 10 MB;
- The ESS will ask you for the total cost / partner and the requested amount to PRIMA / partner. For information Total cost = requested amount to PRIMA + own funding;

The Project Coordinator has to list all partners of the consortium. After having entered the required information, each partner will receive a confirmation email and will be able to edit his/her administrative and financial data.

## Annex 1: Timeline for the call in Section 2

Thematic Area	Call Topics	Call Publication & Opening	Submission Deadline Stage 1	Evaluation Results Stage 1	Submission Deadline Stage 2	Evaluation Results Stage 2
<b>Water Management</b>	Sustainability of Mediterranean irrigated agriculture through the implementation of the WEFE Nexus approach	25/01/2024	04/04/2024	01/07/2024 4	26/09/2024	13/12/2024
<b>Farming Systems</b>	Transformative adaptation of Mediterranean dry farming systems using water harvesting technique to address extreme drought in arid and semi-arid environments	25/01/2024	04/04/2024	01/07/2024 4	26/09/2024	13/12/2024
<b>Agri-Food Value Chain</b>	Developing cost-effective and sustainable technologies adapted to Mediterranean Food Systems to decrease food loss and waste	25/01/2024	04/04/2024	01/07/2024 4	26/09/2024	13/12/2024