


## Topic 1.3.1-2026 (IA): Sustainable on-site transformation of perishable Mediterranean agri-products

TABLE 8. CALL GENERAL CONDITIONS

 <b>Thematic Area-3-Food Value Chain in The Nexus</b>	
Topic 1.3.1 (IA) –2026	<b>Sustainable On-Site Transformation of Perishable Mediterranean Agri-Products</b>
Contribution to SRIA	Operational Objective 7 (Reduce Losses and Wastes) Operational Objective 8 (New Agro-Food Business Models)
Contribution to EU Policies	A <a href="#">Vision for Agriculture and Food</a> , <a href="#">European Green Deal</a> <a href="#">Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)</a> <a href="#">EU Bioeconomy Strategy</a> , <a href="#">New Circular Economy Action Plan</a> <a href="#">Renewable Energy Directive (RED II as amended by RED III)</a> <a href="#">REPowerEU Plan</a>
SDGs	<a href="#">SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)</a> <a href="#">SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)</a> <a href="#">SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production)</a>
Admissibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex A for Section 1 of the PRIMA Annual Work Programme 2026
Eligibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex B for Section 1 of the PRIMA Annual Work Programme 2026
Financial and operational capacity and exclusion	The criteria are described in General Annex C for Section 1 of the PRIMA Annual Work Programme 2026
Award criteria	The criteria are described in General Annex D for Section 1 of the PRIMA Annual Work Programme 2026
Documents	The documents are described in General Annex E for Section 1 of the PRIMA Annual Work Programme 2026
Procedure	The procedure is described in General Annex F for Section 1 of the PRIMA Annual Work Programme 2026
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G for Section 1 of the PRIMA Annual Work Programme 2026
Expected EU contribution per project	PRIMA estimates that an EU contribution of around <b>EUR 2.7 million</b> would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	The total indicative budget for the topic is <b>EUR 10.814 million</b>
Duration	PRIMA considers that proposals with a duration of <b>36 months</b> would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submitting and selecting proposals with different durations.

Type of Action	Innovation Action (IA)
Technology Readiness levels (TRL)	To ensure continuity with previous developments and maximise impact, projects should <b>start from at least TRL 5</b> and to achieve <b>TRL 7-8</b> by the end of the project. Proposals should clearly state the starting and end TRLs of the key technology or technologies targeted in the project. Applicants are encouraged to use the <a href="#">TRL self-assessment tool</a> to accurately determine the <a href="#">Technology Readiness Level (TRL)</a> of their proposal.

### **Expected Outcomes**

Reducing post-harvest losses and improving the capacity to retain value locally are critical priorities for strengthening climate resilience and economic sustainability in Mediterranean agri-food systems. In several parts of the region, losses of fresh and perishable products may reach 30–50%, largely due to climatic stress, insufficient storage, and limited access to appropriate processing infrastructure (FAO, 2019; MedECC, 2020)<sup>1</sup>.

This topic aims to support decentralised and renewable-powered on-site or near-site transformation solutions that extend shelf life, enhance product quality, and increase the share of added value retained within territories. By enabling resource-efficient, low-carbon, and socially inclusive value chain models, projects funded under this call will contribute to the objectives of the [Vision on Agriculture and Food](#), the [New Circular Economy Action Plan](#) and the [EU Bioeconomy Strategy](#), by enabling inclusive rural entrepreneurship, safeguarding agrobiodiversity, and increasing the added value retained within territories, while contributing to the decarbonisation goals of the [Renewable Energy Directive \(RED II as amended by RED III\)](#) and the [REPowerEU Plan](#).

### **Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:**

- Reduction of post-harvest losses and spoilage of perishable Mediterranean agri-food products, particularly in water-scarce or infrastructure-constrained regions.
- Greater market value and competitiveness of traditional, local, and underutilised agricultural products through sustainable processing at or near the point of origin.
- Enhanced circular bioeconomy models, including valorisation of agrobiodiversity and agro-industrial by-products.
- Improved economic resilience and income diversification for smallholders, cooperatives, and rural communities, including in remote and mountain areas.
- Increased participation of women and youth in entrepreneurial and value-added agri-food activities.
- Greater local energy autonomy and reduced reliance on fossil fuels, through renewable-powered or hybrid processing solutions tailored to Mediterranean climatic conditions.

**Scope:** Proposals should support the co-design, development, demonstration, and validation of compact, modular, and cost-efficient processing solutions enabling the on-site or near-site

<sup>1</sup> Sources: FAO (2019). The State of Food and Agriculture 2019: Moving Forward on Food Loss and Waste Reduction. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.  
MedECC (2020). Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1). Union for the Mediterranean / UNEP-MAP Plan Bleu.

transformation of perishable Mediterranean the on-site or near-site transformation of perishable Mediterranean plant agricultural products (e.g., onions, tomatoes, peppers, grapes, olives, citrus fruits, figs, etc.) into higher-value food products (such as dried fruits, pastes, spreads, fermented products, preserved vegetables, herbal extracts etc.). Solutions should be adapted to typical Mediterranean agro-climatic conditions and socio-economic contexts, including areas with limited water availability and weak infrastructure. Technologies should be simple to operate, maintain, repair, and replicate locally, ensuring long-term adoption and sustainability. Processing units may be powered by renewable energy sources (e.g. solar, wind, biomass) or hybrid off-grid systems, and may include capabilities such as drying, cooling, fermentation, preservation, or green extraction. Where relevant, digital and AI-enabled functionalities may be integrated to improve quality control, resource efficiency, and traceability along the value chain.

In line with the award criteria for Innovation Actions, proposals will be assessed on the credibility of their pathways to impact, including the meaningful involvement of SMEs and other innovation actors, as well as on the economic and financial viability of the proposed processing solutions. Applicants are therefore expected to demonstrate cost-effectiveness, affordability, replicability, and scalability, supported by appropriate business and financing models and, where relevant, engagement with value-chain actors or investors.

**Projects are expected to address all the following activities:**

- Co-develop, validate, and field-demonstrate decentralised and modular processing technologies adapted to smallholder, cooperative, and community-based production contexts, including mountain communities and other geographically remote or marginal rural areas.
- Solutions should integrate renewable-energy-powered or hybrid off-grid systems to ensure environmental and operational sustainability under diverse Mediterranean conditions.
- Apply participatory and user-centred design approaches throughout development, testing, and demonstration phases. Proposals are strongly encouraged to adopt a Multi-Actor Approach (MAA)<sup>2</sup>, ensuring meaningful involvement of end users, SMEs, technology providers, researchers, and local authorities/communities across the entire project cycle. Living Labs<sup>3</sup> are encouraged as a framework to support co-creation and stakeholder engagement in real operational contexts.
- Demonstrate technical performance, cost-effectiveness, replicability, and scalability of the proposed solutions in real operational settings. This should include comprehensive technological economic and market analyses, comparative cost and affordability assessments, and the validation of feasible business and scale-up models. Proposals should also present credible exploitation, manufacturing, and deployment strategies, including pathways for local production or assembly, distribution models, and long-term operational support structures.

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<sup>2</sup>The definition and specific requirements of the multi-actor approach as applied in PRIMA can be found in the Introduction of the Horizon Europe Work Programme (2025) - Cluster 6 (pages 14-16).

<sup>3</sup> PRIMA adopts the ENOLL Living Labs definition recognising them as dynamic, open innovation ecosystems where research and innovation are developed, tested, and validated in real-life settings rather than isolated laboratory environments. Through a systematic co-creation approach, Living Labs place citizens, end-users, and local stakeholders at the centre of the innovation process, ensuring that new solutions are not only technically sound and creative, but also relevant, context-appropriate, and grounded in real-world needs.

In addition to selecting at least three PRIMA-specific KPIs, applicants are expected to monitor and report on the following compulsory KPIs:

- Reduction of post-harvest losses (%) for the targeted product(s)
- Energy consumption per unit of transformed product, including renewable energy share;
- Increase in added value retained locally (%) at farm, cooperative, or community level.

Proposals are encouraged to develop and implement training, maintenance, and capacity-building programmes to enable long-term operation, local repair capabilities, and sustained uptake within target territories. Projects selected under this topic are encouraged to establish active synergies with projects funded under the Horizon Europe call [HORIZON-CL6-2025-02-FARM2FORK-02](#). Such synergies could focus on the exchange of best practices, joint dissemination activities, and cross-fertilisation of innovative technological and business-model solutions.