

SMART FOOD PROJECT **INTERREG VI-A ITALY-MALTA**

<p><i>Priorità del Programma</i></p> <p><i>Programme Priority</i></p>	<p><i>1 - Un'area di cooperazione più intelligente per promuovere la ricerca e l'innovazione e lo sviluppo delle competenze per la specializzazione intelligente</i></p> <p><i>1 - A smarter cooperation area to promote research, innovation, and skills development for smart specialisation.</i></p>
<p><i>Obiettivo specifico della Priorità</i></p> <p><i>Specific objective pertaining to the priority</i></p>	<p><i>1.1 - Sviluppare e rafforzare le capacità di ricerca e di innovazione e l'introduzione di tecnologie avanzate nell'area transfrontaliera (RSO1.1)</i></p> <p><i>1.1 – Develop and strengthen research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies in the cross-border area (RSO1.1)</i></p>

PUBLIC NOTICE NO. 6

Open Call for Expressions of Interest for the Participation of Enterprises in the WP4 Pilot Group – Pilot Testing of Service Delivery Activities

SMART FOOD – ITALIA MALTA CUP G73B24000010007

GIVEN THE FOLLOWING LEGAL BASIS

Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund, the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, and financial rules for those funds and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy;

Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down specific provisions for the “European Territorial Cooperation” goal (Interreg) supported by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments;

Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund;

Commission Regulation (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021 amending Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty;

Commission Regulation No. 240/2014 of 7 January 2014 establishing a European Code of Conduct on Partnership within the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds;

Commission Regulation (EU) No. 1407/2013 and subsequent amendments and additions of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid;

Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC, published in the Official Journal of the European Union L 94/65 of 28 March 2014;

Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/75 of 17 January 2022 establishing the list of Interreg programme areas to receive support from the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments of the Union, broken down by component and by Interreg programme under the “European Territorial Cooperation” objective;

Commission Decision C(2022) 9624 of 13 December 2022 approving the INTERREG VI-A Italy–Malta Programme for the 2021–2027 programming period with a financial allocation of €57,604,032 (ERDF + National Co-financing), of which €4,393,486.25 is allocated to programme technical assistance resources;

Resolution No. 170 of 26 April 2023 of the Regional Government of the Sicilian Region adopting the INTERREG VI-A Italy-Malta Programme for the 2021-2027 programming period, approved by Decision C(2022)9624 of 13 December 2022;

Note No. 8980 of 30/06/2023 from the Managing Authority transmitting to the Programme Audit Authority the first version of the document "Description of the functions and procedures in place for the Managing Authority" in compliance with Article 69(11) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021;

CIPESS Resolution No. 78 of 22/12/2021 establishing that, for European Territorial Cooperation programmes involving the Italian Republic, national co-financing shall be set overall at a maximum of 24% of total public expenditure (EU contribution plus national public co-financing);

Law No. 241/1990 laying down general rules on administrative action, published in the Official Gazette of 18 August 1990 No. 192, coordinated and updated most recently by Legislative Decree No. 104 of 16 June 2017;

Legislative Decree No. 36 of 31 March 2023, Public Contracts Code implementing Article 1 of Law No. 78 of 21 June 2022 delegating powers to the Government in the field of public contracts;

Project approval decree DRA No. 976/A7 of 31/12/2024;

Having regard to the reporting manual "Manual on expenditure reporting procedures and management verifications – INTERREG VI-A ITALY MALTA";

A PUBLIC AND OPEN CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

IS HEREBY ANNOUNCED

addressed to all agri-food enterprises interested and meeting the requirements set out in this notice, for participation in the pilot group of the SMART FOOD – Italy Malta project, within the activities envisaged under WP4 – Pilot testing of service delivery.

INTRODUCTION

The SMART FOOD project aims to strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of agri-food enterprises through the use of advanced digital technologies (AI, blockchain, traceability).

WP4 provides for the testing of the services developed within the project through the direct involvement of enterprises expressing interest and meeting the requirements set out in this notice.

The activities envisaged under WP4 are exclusively aimed at the testing, validation and optimisation of the tools developed within the SMART FOOD project and do not constitute individual support measures intended to increase the competitiveness of participating enterprises.

The expression of interest aims to collect applications from MSMEs operating in the agri-food sector with operational headquarters in Sicily or Malta, without establishing a ranking list and without setting a limited number of beneficiaries.

All interested enterprises meeting the admission requirements may participate, subject to the timetable and operational arrangements of the project activities.

The organisation of the activities may take into account territorial and supply-chain representativeness requirements, without prejudice to the open nature of the expression of interest.

Admitted enterprises will participate in the testing of SMART FOOD platform services by testing the platform interfaces, providing data for testing purposes, and supplying useful feedback for the fine-tuning of the project services.

Admitted enterprises will be involved in activities including:

- *collective facilitation and operational support activities aimed at testing platform functionalities, using the platform interface and providing development feedback;*
- *access to the SMART FOOD digital platform for functionality testing;*
- *testing guidance related to product traceability and valorisation support;*
- *participation in networking and supply-chain cooperation activities for the tuning, optimisation and validation of the digital services developed by the project;*
- *testing of experimental data analysis functionalities developed within the project.*

Enterprises should preferably belong to one of the following agri-food supply chains:

Main Supply Chains

- *Wheat / bakery products and pasta*
- *Tomato / processed products*
- *Olives / olive oil*
- *Fruit / processed products*
- *Milk / dairy products*

- *Meat / processed meat products (cold cuts, meat processing)*

Complementary Supply Chains

- *Grapes / wine*
- *Legumes / processed products*
- *Fruit and vegetables / fourth-range products*
- *Dried fruit / processed products*
- *Aromatic herbs*

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Eligible enterprises must:

- *be MSMEs operating in the agri-food sector;*
- *have an operational headquarters in Sicily or Malta;*
- *operate in production, processing or marketing activities;*
- *be duly registered with the Chamber of Commerce or equivalent authority;*
- *not be subject to exclusion conditions provided for by current legislation.*

DURATION OF THE ACTIVITIES

Participation in the pilot group activities will last approximately 5 months, starting from the launch date of the activities, tentatively scheduled for the period June 2026 – November 2026, subject to any extensions related to project implementation.

REPORTING

Admitted enterprises undertake to cooperate in the monitoring and evaluation activities envisaged by the SMART FOOD project.

In particular, enterprises undertake to:

- *provide, upon request by the beneficiary, information and data useful for monitoring the progress of activities and testing results;*
- *participate in questionnaires, survey forms and feedback tools, including digital formats;*
- *contribute to the collection of elements useful for the qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the tested services;*
- *take part, where required, in periodic review activities (meetings, interviews, follow-up sessions);*

- *authorise the use, in aggregated and anonymous form, of the collected information for reporting, communication and dissemination of project results.*

Reporting and monitoring activities do not entail administrative or accounting burdens for enterprises, but are limited to providing information and data related to participation in the project activities.

METHODS AND DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION OF THE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST. GROUNDS FOR INADMISSIBILITY

For admissibility purposes, the application for expression of interest attached to this notice (ANNEX A) must be signed and include personal details and all information necessary to clearly and unequivocally demonstrate the fulfilment of all admission requirements.

The following may be attached to the expression of interest:

- *Company presentation (brochure or short document)*
- *Any informative material*

Applications must be sent by registered mail with return receipt or delivered directly to the offices of the Contracting Authority: CNA SERVIZI ENNA, Via Emilia Romagna 3, Enna, in a sealed envelope bearing the wording "SMART FOOD Project Notice No. 6/2026", or sent by certified email (PEC) to: cnaservizienna@cert.cna.it

The final deadline for receipt of the expression of interest application is 11 June 2026 at 12:00 noon. In the case of postal delivery, the postmark date shall not constitute proof of timely submission.

Statements made and signed in the expression of interest application shall be considered self-certifications; therefore, supporting documentation need not be attached, although it may be requested if deemed appropriate by the contracting authority.

Applications shall be deemed inadmissible in the following cases:

- *incomplete or unsigned application;*
- *failure to sign the application;*
- *submission after the deadline;*
- *absence of admission requirements.*

PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION OF EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Applications received will be verified by CNA Servizi Enna in order to ascertain compliance with the admission requirements set out in this notice.

This procedure does not constitute a comparative procedure, does not provide for the attribution of scores, and does not establish a ranking list. All interested parties meeting the required criteria will be admitted to participate in the project activities according to the arrangements and timetable defined within the SMART FOOD project.

CNA Servizi Enna may request additional documentation or clarifications where necessary to verify the declared requirements. Failure to provide the requested supplementary information within the specified timeframe may result in inadmissibility of the application.

METHODS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE ACTIVITIES

The activities will be organised consistently with the objectives of WP4 and may include coaching sessions, access to and testing of the SMART FOOD digital platform, feedback collection, networking opportunities and supply-chain cooperation initiatives.

Participation by admitted enterprises shall not give rise to contractual relationships or service assignments, nor shall it entitle participants to any remuneration. The expression of interest is solely intended to identify parties interested in participating in the testing of services developed within the project.

In order to ensure adequate representation of the supply chains and territories involved, the organisation of activities may, where possible, enhance the participation of enterprises belonging to priority supply chains and operators active in the various stages of the supply chain, without prejudice to the open nature of the procedure and the admission of all subjects meeting the requirements.

PUBLICITY

This notice is published on the following websites:

- www.cnaenna.eu, partner of the SMART FOOD project;
- www.italiamalta.eu (official website of the Italy-Malta Programme).

PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROCEDURE AND DATA PROCESSING

By signing the expression of interest application, interested parties accept and authorise CNA Servizi Enna, represented by its legal representative pro tempore, to process personal data exclusively for the purposes of the expression of interest procedure.



Data shall be processed by CNA Servizi Enna in compliance with current legislation, including Legislative Decree No. 196 of 2003 and GDPR 679/2016.

The person responsible for data processing is Dr Stefano Rizzo.

Pursuant to Article 13 of Regulation (EU) 2016/679, personal data provided by interested parties will be collected by CNA Servizi Enna and processed for the management of the expression of interest and subsequently used for purposes related to participation in the project activities.

The data subject enjoys the rights referred to in the aforementioned legislative decree, including the right of access to personal data and complementary rights such as the right to rectify, update, complete or erase incorrect, incomplete or unlawfully collected data.

Enna, 08/05/2026

Chief Executive Officer
Stefano Rizzo

APPLICATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PILOT GROUP

SMART FOOD Project – ITALY MALTA CUP G73B24000010007

1. COMPANY IDENTIFICATION DETAILS

Company name: _____

Legal form: _____ VAT Number: _____

Registered office: _____

Operational headquarters (involved in the project):

- Sicily
- Malta

Municipality: _____ Telephone: _____

Email: _____ Certified Email (PEC): _____

Name and surname of contact person: _____

Role within the company: _____

2. COMPANY PROFILE

Main business activity sector:

- Primary production (agriculture)
- Processing
- Production and processing
- Marketing / distribution

3. SUPPLY CHAIN / SECTOR OF ACTIVITY (more than one option may be selected)

- Wheat / bakery products and pasta
- Tomato / processed products
- Olives / olive oil

- Fruit / processed products
- Milk / dairy products
- Meat / processed meat products (cold cuts, meat processing)
- Grapes / wine
- Legumes / processed products
- Fruit and vegetables / fourth-range products
- Dried fruit / processed products
- Aromatic herbs
- Other (please specify): _____

4. ROLE IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

The company (tick one option only):

- Produces raw materials
- Processes products
- Produces and mainly processes its own products
- Markets products

5. SUPPLY CHAIN RELATIONSHIPS

The company currently:

- Already sources from other supply chain operators
- Is willing to source from other operators
- Does not source from other operators

6. COMPANY SIZE

Number of employees:

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- >20

Annual turnover (range):

- < €100,000
- €100,000 – €500,000
- €500,000 – €2,000,000
- > €2,000,000

7. LEVEL OF DIGITALISATION

The company uses:

- No digital tools
- Basic tools (email, social media, spreadsheets)
- Management / traceability software
- Integrated advanced digital systems

8. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN PARTICIPATION

The company is interested in:

Collaborating with other companies in the supply chain:

- Yes
- No

Collaborating with companies from other territories (Sicily/Malta):

- Yes
- No
- To be evaluated

9. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPANY (max. 1,000 characters)

Please briefly describe the company's activities, products, and role within the supply chain:

10. DECLARATIONS

The undersigned hereby declares:

- to meet the requirements set out in the notice;
- that the information provided is true and accurate;
- to have read and fully accepted the notice;
- to authorise the processing of personal data pursuant to GDPR 679/2016.

Place and date : _____

Signature of the legal representative

Attachments (optional):

- Company presentation (brochure or short document)
- Any informative material
