

# *FrontAg#Nexus*

**Impact of Climate-Smart and Water-Saving Frontier Agriculture on the WEF Nexus in Arid Mediterranean Regions**

## **D5.1: Project Management Plan (PMP) 1 (due in Month 3)**

**Lead Authors: Buchenrieder, Gertrud & Biru, Wubneshe (UniBw M)**



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

**This project (GA n° [2242]) is part of the PRIMA program supported by the European Union.**

## Document Information

Grant Agreement No.	2242		
Project Acronym	FrontAg Nexus		
Project Title	Impact of Climate-Smart and Water-Saving Frontier Agriculture on the WEFE Nexus in Arid Mediterranean Regions		
Call	PRIMA Call 2022 Section 1 NEXUS WEFE IA		
Start – ending date   Project Duration	01 May 2023 – 30 April 2026   36 months		
Project Website	frontagnexus.eu		
Project Coordinator	Gertrud Buchenrieder [Universität der Bundeswehr München (UniBw M)]		
Work Package	WP5 “Project coordination, management, and ethics”		
WP Lead Beneficiary	Universität der Bundeswehr München (UniBw M)		
Deliverable   Version   Status	D5.1 Project Management Plan (PMP)		
Lead Author	Buchenrieder, Gertrud (GB) & Biru, Wubneshe (WB) (UniBw M)		
Deliverable type   Dissemination level	R – Report   PU – Public		
Due Date of Deliverable	31.07.2023	Submission Date	31.07.2023
Version   Status	Final		
Contributors	Elisa Appolloni (UNIBO); Michael Reuter (APM)		
Reviewer(s)	Tanay Sıdkı Uyar, Quality Manager (EUROSOLAR Türkiye)		

*Deliverable type: R: Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports); DEC: Websites, press & media actions, videos, etc; OTHER: Software, etc.; Dissemination level: PU: Public; SEN: Sensitive; CI: Classified*

### Disclaimer

This publication reflects the views of the author only. European Commission and PRIMA Foundation cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

### Copyright message © FrontAg Nexus Consortium, 2023

This document contains unpublished original work unless clearly stated otherwise. Previously published material and the work of others has been acknowledged by appropriate citation or quotation, or both. Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

## Document History

Version	Changes	Date	Contributor
0.1	Table of Contents	30.06.2023	Gertrud Buchenrieder (UniBw M)
0.2	Editing	03.07.2023	Wubneshe Biru (UniBw M)
0.3	Suggestions for changes	13.07.2023	Elisa Appolloni (UNIBO), Michael Reuter (APM)
0.7	Revision of suggested changes	17.07.2023	Gertrud Buchenrieder (UniBw M)
0.9	Review	30.07.2023	Tanay Sidki Uyar (EUROSOLAR Türkiye)
1.0	Final Version	31. 07.2023	Gertrud Buchenrieder (UniBw M)

## Participants

**Universität der Bundeswehr  
München**  
(UniBw M), Germany



**aquaponik manufaktur GmbH**  
(APM), Germany



**Foodscale Hub**  
(FSH), Greece



**Ben-Gurion University of the Negev**  
(BGU), Israel



**University of Bologna**  
(UNIBO), Italy



**National Agricultural Research  
Centre**  
(NARC), Jordan



**AgroBiosciences, University of  
Mohamed VI Polytechnic**  
(UM6P), Morocco



**ElBosten Phytagri**  
(ElBosten), Tunisia



**Renewable Energy Association**  
(EUROSOLAR Türkiye), Türkiye



**Bodrum Municipality**  
(Bodrum Muncplty), Türkiye



## Executive Summary

The Project Management Plan serves to document the internal quality structures, the project management and support structures including quality review and financial controlling of the FrontAg Nexus project.

## List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

AMGA	Annotated Model Grant Agreement
CA	Consortium Agreement
CO	Coordinator
Co-CO	Co-Coordinator
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
DCM	Dissemination and Communication Manager
DMP	Data Management Plan
DoA	Description of Action
EC	European Commission
EEAB	External Expert Advisory Board
EIP-AGRI	agricultural European Innovation Partnership ( <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/content/eip-agri-common-format">ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/content/eip-agri-common-format</a> )
FNS	Food and Nutrition Security
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IEA	Independent Ethics Advisor
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
KR	Key Result
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MEL Platform	Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning platform ( <a href="https://mel.cgiar.org/user/login">https://mel.cgiar.org/user/login</a> )
PMP	Project Management Plan
QM	Quality Manager
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RAS	Recirculating aquaculture system
SO	Specific Objective
TECA	Technologies & Practices for Small Agricultural Producers ( <a href="https://fao.org/teca/en">fao.org/teca/en</a> )
WEFE	Water-Environment-Food-Energy (WEFE) Nexus
WEcoF	WEcoF innovation portal ( <a href="https://sigma-nexus.eu">sigma-nexus.eu</a> )
WP	Work Package

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	4
List of Abbreviations & Acronyms .....	4
1 Introduction .....	7
1.1 Scope of the Project Management Plan (PMP) .....	7
1.2 Update of the Project Management Plan (PMP) .....	7
1.3 Document structure .....	7
2 Overview of the FrontAg Nexus project .....	7
2.1 Abstract of the FrontAg Nexus project .....	7
2.2 Project structure .....	8
2.2.1 Specific objectives of the project .....	9
2.2.2 Breakdown of the work program .....	10
2.2.3 Implementation schedule .....	12
3 Project organization .....	13
3.1 Organizational bodies .....	13
3.1.1 General Assembly .....	13
3.1.2 Project Steering Committee (PSC) .....	14
3.1.3 Coordination and coordination team .....	15
3.1.4 Work package teams .....	15
3.1.5 External Expert Advisory Board .....	15
3.2 Roles and responsibilities .....	16
3.2.1 Project coordination roles .....	16
3.2.2 General decision making .....	18
3.2.3 Gender equality .....	18
3.2.4 Inclusion and empowerment of women, young adults, and refugees .....	19
3.3 Project meetings .....	19
4 Project management .....	20
4.1 Reference documents .....	20
4.1.1 Description of the action (DoA) .....	20
4.1.2 Consortium Agreement (CA) .....	21
4.1.3 Project Management Plan (PMP) .....	21
4.1.4 Quality assurance .....	21
4.2 MEL Platform for project and financial management .....	23
4.3 Periodic reporting .....	24
4.3.1 Periodic technical report .....	25

4.3.2	Periodic financial report .....	25
4.3.3	Scheduling of periodic reporting .....	28
4.3.4	Youtube guidelines on the use of the MEL Platform .....	29
4.4	Continuous reporting .....	29
4.5	Internal reporting .....	29
4.5.1	Progress and risk reports.....	29
4.5.2	Costs and resources statement.....	29
4.5.3	Personnel resources .....	29
4.6	Documentation .....	30
Annexes .....		31
Annex I: List of deliverables of FrontAg Nexus.....		31

## Table of Figures

Figure 1: The contribution of FrontAg Nexus to the WEFE Nexus .....	8
Figure 1: Project overview and WPs of FrontAg Nexus.....	9
Figure 2: GANTT chart of FrontAg Nexus .....	12
Figure 3: Organizational structure of FrontAg Nexus.....	13
Figure 4: Statement about non-toleration of sexual or any other form of harassment.....	18
Figure 5: Overall quality chain of FrontAg Nexus.....	21
Figure 6: Quality management and submission schedule of deliverables .....	22
Figure 7: Digital MEL Platform of PRIMA .....	24
Figure 8: Excerpt of the roadmap in the MEL Platform .....	24
Figure 9: Reporting timeline and types of reports .....	25
Figure 10: Preparation scheduling of periodic reporting .....	28
Figure 11: Example for calculating the annual hourly rate for personnel .....	30

## List of Tables

Table 1: Types and frequency of meetings within FrontAg Nexus .....	20
Table 2: Schedule for meetings of the General Assembly .....	20
Table 3: Prior notice to a meeting.....	20
Table 4: Cost categories and required input in the cost/financial statements .....	27

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Scope of the Project Management Plan (PMP)

The scope of the Project Management Plan (PMP) is twofold: (1) The PMP serves as an instructive reference document and a management tool for the FrontAg Nexus partners. (2) The PMP further clarifies the Description of Action (DoA) by precisely outlining the different Work Packages (WPs) and related tasks and defining responsibilities to ensure a smooth implementation of the project, and therewith contribute to the overall objectives of FrontAg Nexus.

## 1.2 Update of the Project Management Plan (PMP)

The PMP is designed as a living document with regards to scheduling, implementation and coordination of interactions between the WPs. If necessary, further updates will be incorporated to consider the jointly agreed changes in terms of management rules or temporal references.

## 1.3 Document structure

This document comprises the following chapters:

**Chapter 1** summarizes the scope of the PMP, refers to possible updates and outlines the overall structure for better comprehension and readability.

**Chapter 2** provides a summary of the project, gives an overview of the objectives, the structure and workflow, and the time schedule of FrontAg Nexus.

**Chapter 3** is devoted to describing the project organization.

**Chapter 4** explains the project management rules and quality management.

**Chapter 5** presents the rules related to communication and dissemination processes. This will be further elaborated in D6.1 – Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication Plan and Reports I (due in month 6).

# 2 Overview of the FrontAg Nexus project

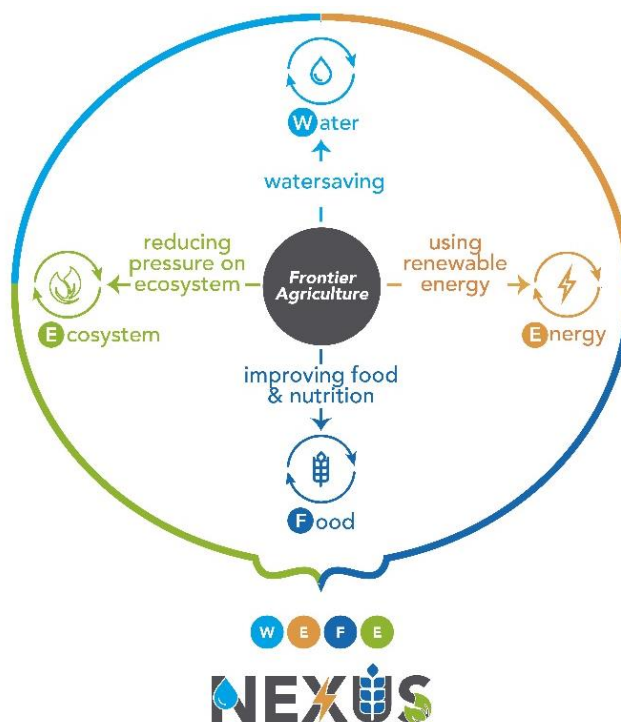
## 2.1 Abstract of the FrontAg Nexus project

The Mediterranean Region is one of the climate change hotspots in the world due to water scarcity and reliance on climate-sensitive agriculture. Thus, boosting climate change adaptation and mitigation through actions and innovations that reduce pressure on the water, energy, food, and ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus, including biodiversity is paramount. FrontAg Nexus responds to this challenge by identifying sustainable frontier agriculture production systems that increase regional food and nutrition security and conserve the environment (Figure 1). Furthermore, factors that foster the adoption of an integrated resource-management approach, considering the interconnections of the WEFE Nexus and the growing population in the Region will be analysed.

FrontAg Nexus follows a WEFE Nexus thinking and a multi-actor approach, involving 6 Mediterranean countries (Greece, Italy, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia, and Türkiye) as well as one of the world's driest countries, Jordan. FrontAg Nexus contributes to the community of practice by identifying, incorporating and sharing frontier agricultural solutions. Frontier agriculture comprises climate-smart and water-saving technologies such as hydroponics, aquaponics, and insect farming (BSF: Black Soldier Fly larvae breeding), whose energy efficiency can be increased through agrophotovoltaic. These frontier



agricultural solutions are the basis for socio-innovative adaptation experiments (i.e., demonstration cases) because they require limited arable land, water, energy, or wealth and reduce organic waste.



**Figure 1: The contribution of FrontAg Nexus to the WEFE Nexus**

FrontAg Nexus will show that frontier agriculture improves livelihood security by delivering safe and nutritious food and reducing rural-urban migration linked to local resource scarcity. Frontier agriculture is also suitable for urban, refugee, and Bedouin communities. Capacity-development activities will take place at the producer and policy level. At the producer level, this will be done by showcasing positive experiences and establishing a communities-supporting-communities collaboration. At the policy level, FrontAg Nexus will demonstrate how integrating frontier agriculture into the Nexus approach improves not only the environmental but also the socio-economic situation of all stakeholders. FrontAg Nexus guides production and policy transformation in the Mediterranean Region by adhering to the [EU Taxonomy Regulation](#).

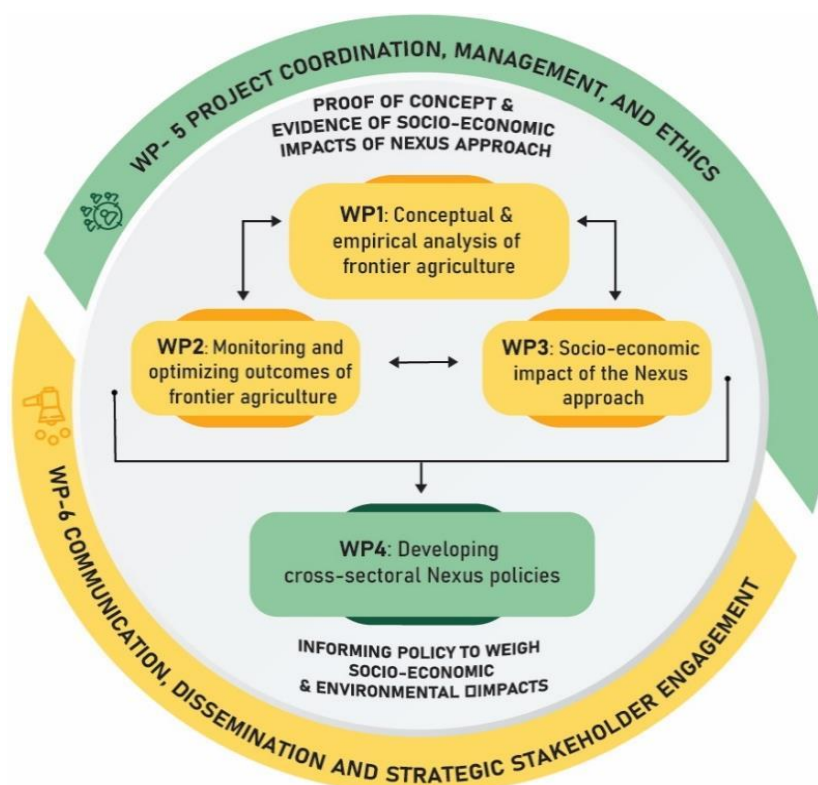
To learn more about the FrontAg Nexus project and stay up to date, visit <https://frontagnexus.eu> or <https://mel.cgiar.org/projects/1828> and follow us on social media:

1. [Twitter Account](#)
2. [Facebook Account](#)
3. [LinkedIn Account](#)
4. [YouTube Account](#)
5. [Instagram Account](#)

## 2.2 Project structure

The general project implementation structure of FrontAg Nexus is displayed Figure 3. The project consists of 6 work packages (WPs), accomplished by 10 beneficiaries, respectively partners. While

ethics was originally included in WP5, it will be presented in the PMP separately under the heading “Ethics Requirements”.



**Figure 2: Project overview and WPs of FrontAg Nexus**

### 2.2.1 Specific objectives of the project

FrontAg Nexus aims to achieve certain specific objectives (SOs) and key results (KR), based on the listed key performance indicators (KPIs). All partners will monitor the achievement of the KRs associated with the SOs as well as the KPIs.

**SO#1:** Identification of prototypes and proof of concepts (if applicable) for hydroponics, aquaponics, insect farming, and vermiculture/vermicomposting that are climate-smart and minimize the pressure on water, land, energy, and biodiversity.

#### Key results with KPIs:

- KR1.1: 10+ frontier agriculture demonstration cases in five (Israel, Italy, Morocco, Tunisia, Türkiye) Mediterranean countries and Jordan.
- KR1.2: Water use efficiency up to 90% in hydroponics and aquaponics compared to conventional farming.
- KR1.3: Insect-based protein fish feed and humus based on upcycling of organic waste reduces the respective costs by 40-50% in recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS)/aquaponics and hydroponics.
- KR1.4: 33% increased availability of fish protein through RAS/aquaponics compared to conventional aquaculture.
- KR1.5: Frontier agriculture-WEFE Nexus-related indicators monitored in demonstration cases.
- KR1.6: Frontier agriculture technologies and practices are resilient to external shocks.
- KR1.7: Frontier agricultural innovations are powered by renewable energy, where applicable.

- KR1.8: Link demonstration cases to digital innovation hubs (DIHs), e.g., SmartAgriHubs.eu or DigitalAgriHubs.eu, to increase the adaptation capacity of stakeholders.
- KR1.9: 9+ practice abstracts to document innovative knowledge will be uploaded to the WEcoF (Building an innovation portal to align research and innovation by promoting synergies among the Nexus), EIP-AGRI, or TECA websites as part of the community of practice.

**SO#2:** Describe the Nexus outcomes and business opportunities related to hydroponics, aquaponics, insect farming, and vermiculture/vermicomposting in the respective supply and value chains.

**Key results with KPIs:**

- KR2.1: 3+ supply and value chain models for hydroponics, aquaponics, insect farming, and/or vermiculture/vermicomposting in the five Mediterranean countries (Israel, Italy, Morocco, Tunisia, Türkiye) and Jordan.
- KR2.2: 84+ stakeholders, innovation actors related to the 10+ demonstration cases.
- KR2.3: 6 (countries) 120+ survey respondents to determine intention to engage in frontier agriculture.
- KR2.4: 1 annual capacity building activity per demonstration case, including supply and value chains.

**SO#3:** Assess socio-economic impacts of the Nexus approach emerging from frontier agriculture on the governance of WEFE resources.

**Key results with KPIs:**

- KR3.1: Evidence based socio-economic impact analysis using the sustainable livelihood framework (SLF).
- KR3.2: Cross-sectoral and sufficiently interdependent WEFE policy roadmap for frontier agriculture.
- KR3.3: Avoiding disciplinary silos by implementing 2 annual stakeholder-policy engagements per country with demonstration case(s).

FrontAG Nexus will identify proofs of concept for hydroponics, RAS and/or aquaponics<sup>1</sup>, insect farming, and vermiculture/vermicomposting that are minimizing the pressure on the WEFE Nexus in the Mediterranean Region (SO#1). WP1 and WP2 are primarily contributing to SO#1. SO#2 is about the Nexus outcomes and business opportunities related to the aforementioned frontier agricultural innovations in the respective supply and value chains (WP2, WP3). Capacity building and stakeholder engagement take place in WP2 and WP4. The activities of WP2, WP3, WP4, and WP6 address SO#3. WP4 will frame the cross-sectoral WEFE policy roadmaps. WP4 outcomes will feed into WP6 to facilitate capacity development activities and to foster community of practice.

## 2.2.2 Breakdown of the work program

The breakdown of the work program relates to 6 WPs and ensures acoherent management of the project to reach the consortium objectives. All WPs mentioned in the following consist of different tasks, led by the task leaders as pointed out in Part 2 of the Grant Agreement of FrontAg Nexus.

**WP1 – Conceptual and empirical analysis of frontier agriculture in the Mediterranean Region (WP1-lead: BGU, P4):** Oriented towards the conceptual and empirical analysis of frontier agriculture, WP1 will (i) systematically review existing approaches of frontier agriculture in the Mediterranean

<sup>1</sup> RAS are designed to control the environmental facets of production by continually filtering, treating, and reusing water and thus increasing operational efficiency while reducing risks from pollution and pathogens. Combining RAS with hydroponics (i.e., aquaponics), increases animal welfare and productivity while reducing environmental stress.

Region, (ii) model WEFE resource sensitive supply and value chains in the context of frontier agriculture in the case countries, and (iii) protocol of practical information of frontier agricultural technologies. The frontier agricultural solutions proposed include hydroponics, aquaponics (RAS, incl. mechanical filter, bio-filter, sludge treatment, etc.), insect farming, and vermiculture/vermicomposting based on agrophotovoltaic, where applicable.

**WP2 – Monitoring and optimizing outcomes of frontier agriculture through WEFE resource indicators (WP2-lead: UNIBO, P5):** Oriented towards the identification of relevant WEFE indicators related to frontier agriculture, WP2 will (i) identify 10+ demonstration cases in Israel, Italy, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, and Türkiye, (ii) propagate proofs of concept for frontier agricultural innovations, and will (iii) monitor WEFE Nexus indicators of frontier agricultural innovations in the demonstration case sites.

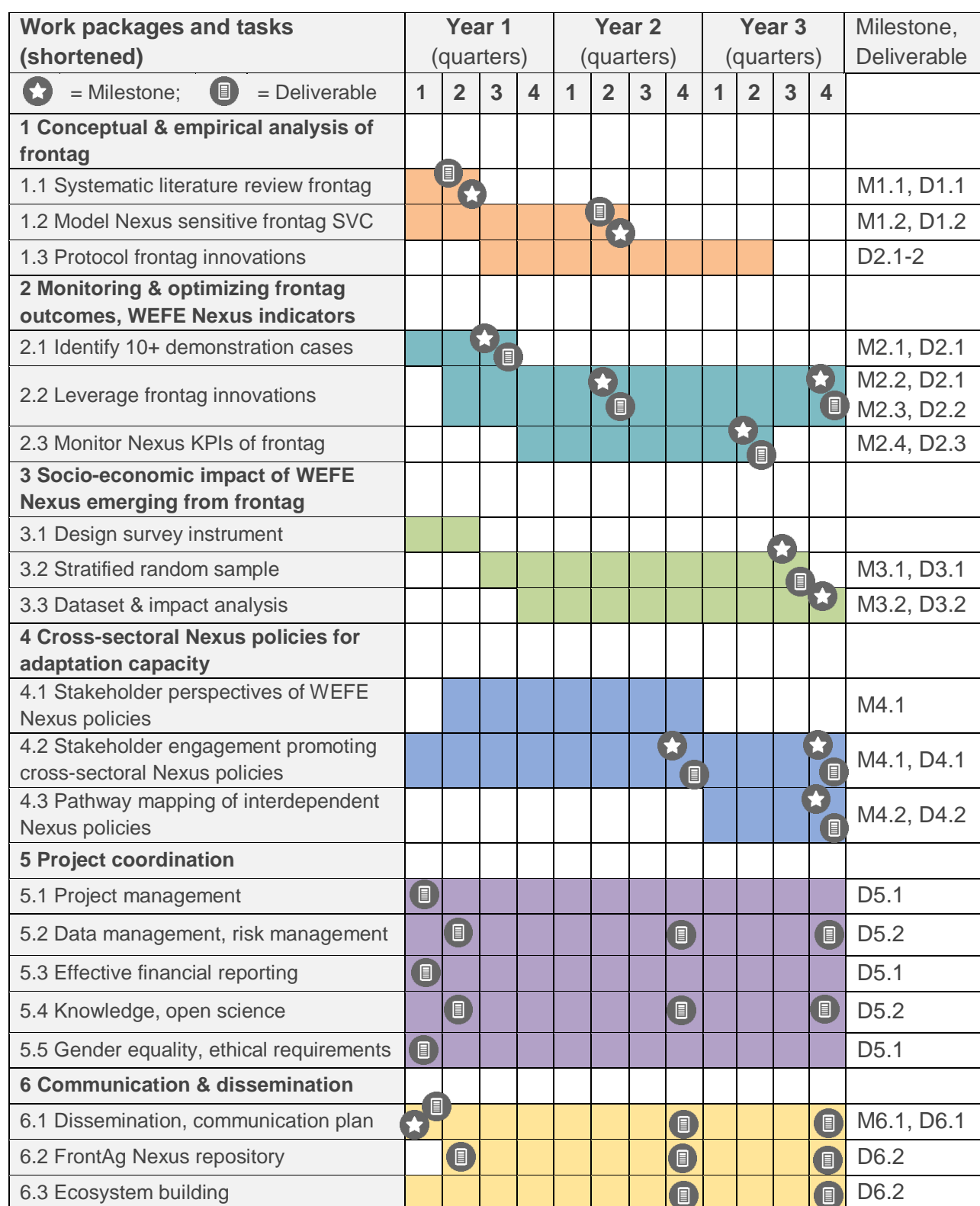
**WP3 – Socio-economic impacts of the Nexus approach emerging from frontier agriculture (WP3-lead: NARC, P6):** WP3 sets out to determine the socio-economic impacts of the WEFE Nexus approach emerging from frontier agriculture by (i) constructing an adequate survey instrument to reflect the SLF, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and KPIs of WEFE Nexus outcomes, (ii) conducting a stratified random sampled survey, and (iii) analyzing the impact of frontier agriculture on sustainable livelihoods and WEFE Nexus.

**WP4 – Developing cross-sectoral WEFE Nexus policies for adaptation capacity (WP4-lead: EUROSOLAR Türkiye, P9):** WP4 will develop cross-sectoral WEFE Nexus policy roadmaps to expanding the adaptation capacity to climate change in the context of frontier agriculture by (i) identifying concerns and perspectives of stakeholders regarding WEFE Nexus policies, (ii) promoting cross-sectoral policy decision making and stakeholder engagement, and by (iii) mapping policy interdependency and causal pathways. Four stakeholder engagements per country, e.g., in the form of focus group discussions (FGDs) will take place to develop WEFE Nexus policy roadmaps, thereby expanding the Mediterranean Region's adaptation capacity to climate change by means of the multisolving approach.

**WP5 – Project coordination, management, and ethics (WP5-lead: UniBw M, P1):** Oriented towards the coordination and management of FrontAg Nexus according to schedule and budget, WP5 aims to: (i) ensure effective project management and coordination, including legal issues, reporting, quality management, and financial management; (ii) assess, monitor, and manage risks; (iii) ensure proper data management, open science and protection of IPRs; (iv) ensure ethical compliance, equality of gender and cultural respect; (v) act as central point of contact for participants and the European Commission (EC).

**WP6 – Communication, dissemination and strategic stakeholder engagement (WP-lead: FSH Greece, P3):** Oriented towards external establishment of FrontAg Nexus, WP6 aims to (i) set, deploy, evaluate, and update an effective dissemination, communication, and exploitation plan; (ii) introduce the project to targeted communities and foster EU-Mediterranean partnerships; (iii) support communities-for-communities engagement and expand the FrontAg Nexus ecosystem.

**Ethics requirements (WP-lead: UniBw M, P1):** Ensuring compliance with the 'ethics requirements' that the project must comply with. The WP-lead is supported by an individual ethics advisor (Prof. Raymond Auerbach of South Africa), who was appointed in month 1 of the project after an open call as well as the project-ethics manager (Luna Mohammad Taher AlHadidi of NARC, P6), who was appointed during the kick-off meeting (KOM), also in month 1 of the project.



Note: frontag = frontier agriculture; SVC = supply and value chain

Figure 3: GANTT chart of FrontAg Nexus

## 2.2.3 Implementation schedule

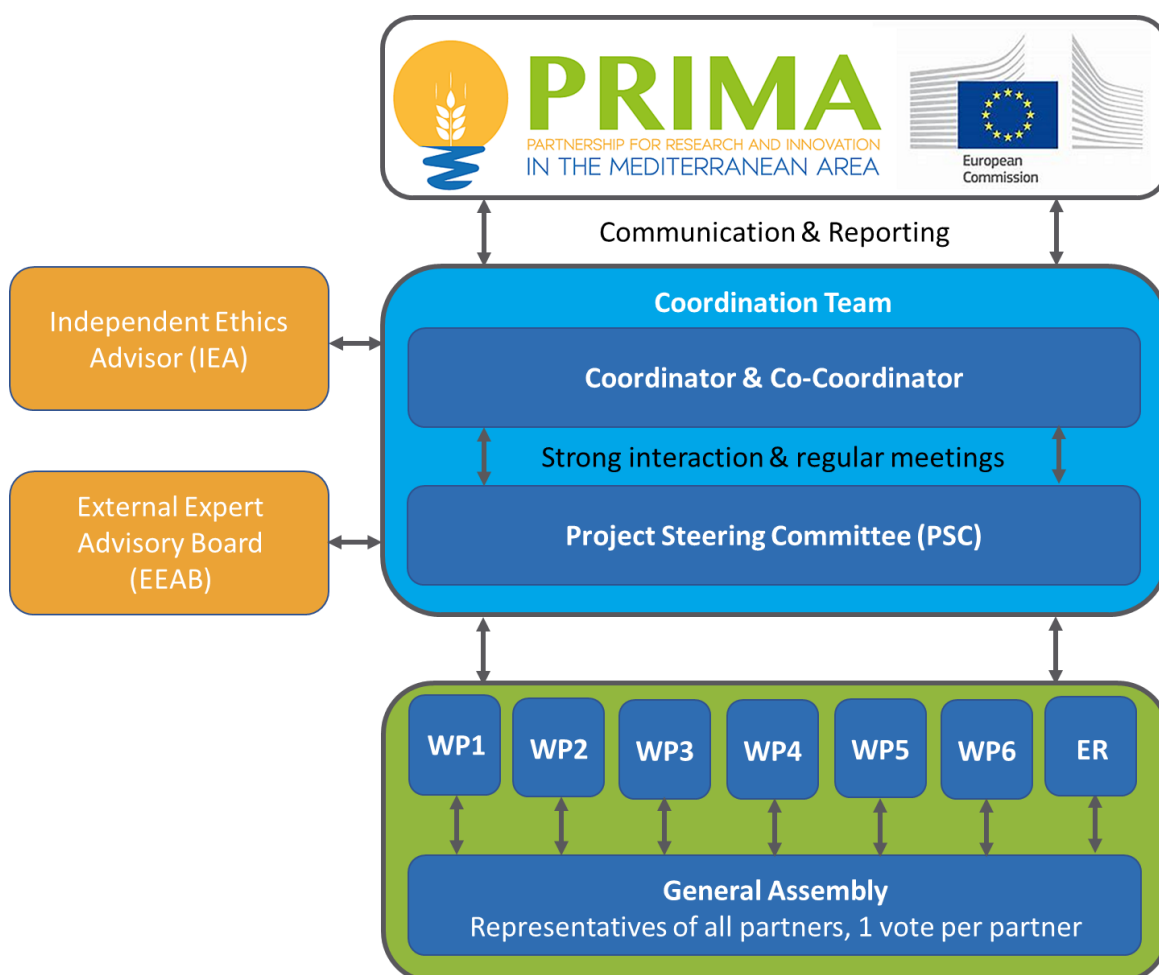
In order to manage FrontAg Nexus efficiently and effectively, the project implementation schedule was established in line with the breakdown of the WPs as visible in the Gantt chart set out in Part 2 of the Grant Agreement, here **Figure 3**. The web-based collaboration platform of FrontAg Nexus is provided

by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and known as MEL (monitoring, evaluation, learning) Platform (<https://mel.cgiar.org/user/login>). The project implementation schedule will be updated if necessary.

### 3 Project organization

#### 3.1 Organizational bodies

This section outlines FrontAg Nexus organizational structure with its main organizational bodies and shows additionally the relations with the EC and the External Expert Advisory Board (EEAB). The **Figure 4** depicts the organization of the FrontAg Nexus project. There are 4 main levels, namely the General Assembly, the Coordination Team that consists of the CO/Co-CO and the PSC, the WP leaders and the Task leaders. The more detailed organizational procedures are part of the Consortium Agreement (CA).



**Figure 4: Organizational structure of FrontAg Nexus**

Notes: ER = Ethics Requirements; WP = work package

#### 3.1.1 General Assembly

The General Assembly is the ultimate decision-making body of the project consortium and consists of one representative from each partner. This body decides on the overall project management strategy,



including contractual matters and exploitation matters. The interaction between the partners, the distribution of funds and the decision-making (e.g., voting rights) are laid out in detail in the CA. The tasks, missions and objectives of the GA are as follows:

- to assess the performed work, take decisions about the strategy of the project,
- to take major decisions on issues related to the technical implementation of the action,
- to analyze conflicts related to the technical implementation of the action between partners and propose solution measures,
- to add new beneficiaries or Affiliated Entity (AE) of the consortium if need arises,
- to appoint/replace members of the PSC if need arises,
- to amend the Grant Agreement, if necessary,
- to change or exchange WPs.

The General Assembly is chaired by the coordinator (CO). The General Assembly will meet once every project year. The first General Assembly (KOM: kick-off meeting) took place in Istanbul, was hosted by EUROSOLAR Türkiye and lasted from June 1-2, 2023.

During the General Assembly meetings, issues (e.g., financial issues) as well as progress within WPs and main achievements will be presented, discussed, and decided upon. The internal reporting will include the main results achieved by the partners, the main difficulties encountered, press releases and alike, and the publications and/or conference participations during the reporting period. The General Assembly will also review the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) according to the regulations in the Grant Agreement and the Consortium Agreement.

### 3.1.2 Project Steering Committee (PSC)

The PSC is the governing body for the execution of the project and an additional decision-making body of the project consortium. Member partners are:

- Coordinator (CO) (UniBw M, P1): Gertrud Buchenrieder,
- Co-Coordinator (UniBw M, P1): Wubneshe Biru,
- Quality Manager (QM) (EUROSOLAR Türkiye, P9): Tanay Sıdkı Uyar,
- Dissemination & Communication Manager (FSH, P3): Ismini Savvaidou,
- Project-Ethics Manager (NARC, P6): Luna Mohammad Taher AlHadidi,
- Prof. Dr. Raymond Auerbach (IEA) as need arises, and
- Principal investigators of consortium partners without a specific function in the PSC (i.e., APM/P2, BGU/P4, UNIBO/P5, UM6P/P7, ElBosten Phytagri/P8, Bodrum Municipality/P10).

The PSC, led by the CO/Co-CO, make decisions on the key project issues, particularly those related to financial matters, resources, IPR, changes in the management plan, and changes in consortium membership (i.e., inclusion of new beneficiaries or AE, or departure of current beneficiaries or AE). The PSC can be consulted during the project lifetime for important decisions (voting rules are defined in the CA). Furthermore, the PSC prepares decisions for the GA. The two main key roles of the PSC are the following:

- To take charge of the management of the fund and possible conflicts,
- To assess the work carried out within the WPs and ensure its alignment with the project objectives.
- Internal review of the project regarding milestones, deliverables, budget, and risks.

The PSC meets at least twice per year, ideally bi-monthly. The PSC meeting will be organized and moderated by the CO and/or Co-CO.

### 3.1.3 Ethics board

The PSC also serves as Ethics Board, together with the IEA as well as the principal investigators of the consortium partners without a specific function in the PSC (i.e., APM/P2, BGU/P4, UNIBO/P5, UM6P/P7, ElBosten Phytagri/P8, Bodrum Municipality/P10). The Ethical Board oversees the adherence to the ethical requirements as described in the DoA (Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement) and the Ethical Framework of FrontAg Nexus.

### 3.1.4 Coordination and Coordination Team

The CO is the legal entity acting as the intermediary between the beneficiaries and PRIMA, respectively the EC. The CO reports directly to the Project Officer, Prof. Dr. Ali Rhouma, and works closely with the WP leaders in monitoring the technical implementation of the project action.

The CO is entitled to make urgent low-level decisions, if necessary, after discussing the situation with the WP leaders. The CO can propose solutions and contingency plans in case of delay, discrepancies or if action choices must be made. The CO will be supported by the Co-CO in all administrative and financial management tasks and further by all partners. The CO, the Co-CO, and the PSC collaborate closely to ensure the efficient and transparent execution of the overall project.

### 3.1.5 Work package teams

The Work Package Teams (WP teams), managed by each WP leader, implement the action activities and report to the General Assembly and the PSC. The WP leaders are responsible for the day-to-day management and coordination of WPs. The main responsibilities of the WP teams include the following:

- To implement the action activities as planned in the Grant Agreement;
- To provide guidelines to the different partners regarding their specific tasks in the WP, and identifying and channeling relevant input from other WPs;
- To ensure that the actions are aligned with the project schedule and work plan; minor deviations can be settled by the concerned WP leader and WP teams, while larger deviations need to be reported to the PSC;
- To collect data for the review reports to be sent to the CO and all relevant partners;
- To prepare reports in time for the PSC and especially the CO to ensure the quality chain and for submitting the reports to PRIMA/EC by the CO;
- To report any other critical issues to the CO for timely risk management.

### 3.1.6 External Expert Advisory Board

The EEAB of FrontAg Nexus supports the project to ensure state-of-the art scientific and policy actions. The EEAB also supports the project in widening its ecosystem beyond the consortium. It is composed of external experts from non-funded entities. They advise on technical developments, innovation and exploitation and evaluate the work towards the set overall objectives. The EEAB consists of 3 members but could be extended if necessary. Current EEAB members are

- Nelly Maina, Gender Officer, African Development Bank (AFDB)
- Rohana Subasinghe, Senior Researcher, WorldFish Center
- Dorte Verner, Lead Economist in Food and Agriculture Global Practice, World Bank

Members of the EEAB will participate, by invitation, in General Assembly meetings to obtain information on project progress and accomplishments and to make recommendations, but they will not have voting rights.



The CO is authorized to execute with each member of the EEAB a non-disclosure agreement, the terms of which shall be no less stringent than those determined in the CA, no later than 60 calendar days after their appointment or prior to any exchange of confidential information, whichever is sooner. The CO will take the minutes of the EEAB meetings and prepare responses to EEAB suggestions. EEAB meetings will be held during GAs, if necessary.

## 3.2 Roles and responsibilities

### 3.2.1 Project coordination roles

**Project Coordinator (CO):** The CO, Prof. Dr. Gertrud Buchenrieder (UniBw M, P1), is responsible for the lead of the project, the coordination of the consortium parties and will act as the final validation instance for all documents. The CO will chair the General Assembly and the PSC meetings and will be responsible for the dissemination of information, results, and feedback towards the consortium parties. The CO will be the interface to PRIMA/EC (Project Officer and Financial Officer) for which she will be the main contact point, including the distribution of funds to the parties, and answering all formal requests. The CO aligns the project and serves as a de-escalation body for all matters of the project. The CO's entity will oversee the payments to the beneficiaries.

**Co-Coordinator (Co-CO):** The Co-CO, Dr. Wubneshe Biru (UniBw M, P1), supports the CO in all administrative tasks regarding reporting, budget management, and implementation of administrative rules and procedures. She also monitors, together with the CO, the project's implementation and quality procedures. On a day-to-day basis, the Co-CO works closely with the CO to support the project actions in view of achieving the project's objectives.

**Quality Manager (QM):** The QM, Prof. Dr. Tanay Sıdkı Uyar (EUROSOLAR Türkiye, P9), contributes to the project's reporting and quality review process of deliverables and milestones. In doing so, he collaborates with the CO and Co-CO. The QM will conduct the internal quality assessment of milestones and deliverables that are based on quantifiable objectives. He will report during the PSC meetings about his observations regarding the quality of milestones and deliverables. The QM will also review and monitor the foreseen and unforeseen risks which project partners and WP leaders identify and communicate as part of the internal reporting.

All deliverables generated by the partners in charge will be checked and reviewed by the project's quality chain, described in Section 4.1.4.

**Dissemination and Communication Manager (DCM):** The DCM, Ms. Ismini Savvaidou (FSH, P3), organizes and promotes the communication and dissemination of successful results and important information towards different stakeholders and the public. The DCM has the responsibility to keep track of all communication and dissemination activities within the project to establish a targeted dissemination of project results and latest achievements. This will allow the consortium to reinforce the links between the relevant European and non-European communities and end-users clustered around other international or national research activities. The beneficiaries contribute to the communication and dissemination activities by promptly providing the DCM with corresponding information. The DCM will have the responsibility to present an updated overview of all dissemination and communication activities at each General Assembly meeting. The DCM will monitor the indicators regarding dissemination and communication.

**Project-Ethics Manager:** The Project-Ethics Manager, Dr. Luna Mohammad Taher AlHadidi (NARC, P6), ensures compliance with the ethical principles and the applicable EU, international, and national laws for the ethical issues identified in the "Ethics and Security" summary report (see Grant Agreement, Part II, Section 5) and any additional ethics issues that may emerge in the course of the project. Her

tasks may vary depending on the different phases of the FrontAg Nexus project, but in general, the Ethics Manager monitors the proper implementation of ethics requirements by all project partners.

The Ethics Manager also monitors the compliance of project activities with all guidelines established in D5.2 Data Management Plan (DMP, due in month 6) on the collection and processing of data necessary for the project, including the identification of personal data. In collaboration with the CO & Co-CO, the Ethics Manager ensures the correct collection, processing, storage, securing, and deletion of data and the conformity of these processes with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union (EU). She will recommend strategy adjustments to the General Assembly if necessary.

To facilitate the work of the Ethics Manager and the project partners, the CO, Co-CO, and IEA will develop an “Ethical Framework” during the first months of the project. The Ethical Framework will ensure that the project’s participatory, multi-actor research approach follows good ethical practice and guarantees fair and equal power relationships between all parties involved. Furthermore, it monitors the ethical clearance process with the relevant national/institutional ethics committees and boards.

The Ethical Manager works with and serves as point of contact for the IEA and is responsible for involving the IEA in the project implementation if necessary.

**Independent Ethics Advisor (IEA):** The “Ethics and Security” summary report (see Grant Agreement, Part II, Section 5) foresees the appointment of an IEA to monitor and advise the consortium throughout the implementation of the project on the ethics issues identified for the project. Based on a limited call procedure, Prof. Dr. Raymond Auerbach was awarded the service contract to act as IEA in the FrontAg Nexus project. Starting Month 1, the IEA

- provides full support to the CO, PSC members, and project scientists and researchers in observing all ethical aspects related to the project actions,
- participates in the web-based meetings (web-based) of the PSC,
- assists in the development of a comprehensive ethics framework on the ethical aspects within the first months after the start of the project,
- assists the CO, Co-CO, and Project-Ethics Manager in the preparation of the ethics reports in Work Package 5 “Project Coordination”, each at the end of the reporting period (Month 18, Month 36).

**Work Package Leaders (WP leaders):** The WP leaders are responsible for managing partners and their actions relevant to the different tasks of the WPs. They are also in charge of mitigating and reporting all potential risks affecting the project, solving technical issues and actions allocated to their WP towards the PSC. WP leaders ensure that necessary interaction between WPs is assured, especially if actions of different WPs build on each other or are interdependent. They are in constant exchange with the CO & Co-CO and keep her and the CT up to date regarding the progress of the current tasks.

**Task Leaders and Task Teams:** Task leaders manage the parties and activities within a specific task. They are in charge of mitigating and reporting all potential risks affecting the project, solving issues regarding the technical implementation of actions related to their task and report the WP Leader.

**Demonstration case managers:** Six of the Mediterranean countries engaged in FrontAg Nexus engage in demonstration cases (WP2): Israel (BGU, P4), Italy (UNIBO, P5), Jordan (NARC, P6), Morocco (ElBosten Phytagri, P8), Tunisia (UM6P, P7), Türkiye (EUROSOLAR Türkiye, P9 & Bodrum Municipality, P10).

The partners with demonstration cases (10+) will report on their progress and challenges in setting up prototypes of frontier agricultural technologies and business models. Several partners indicated already to implement a more research and a more development orientated demonstration case.

### 3.2.2 General decision making

Ideally, the WP leaders make decisions within the scope of their WPs, respectively WP tasks in consensus with the Task leaders, other involved partners, and the Coordination Team (see **Figure 4**). For more far-reaching decisions, the General Assembly and/or PSC shall be consulted in accordance with the CO. All decisions can be taken in personal/digital meetings or through written documents that are distributed electronically. The rules on decision making within the project are described in detail in the CA.

Decisions must be based on a consensus among the partners involved. If consensus cannot be reached or if a conflict arises between the partners, the issue will be discussed at the WP level, with the arbitration of the WP Leader. If arbitration is rejected or no solution is found, the CO will mediate to reach an agreement. If the CO and the PSC fail to resolve the issue, or if the CO is involved in the issue, it would then be brought to the General Assembly, which concludes the dispute by majority vote. For serious and urgent matters, an extraordinary General Assembly can be scheduled.

### 3.2.3 Gender equality

As stated in the Grant Agreement, equal opportunities for women within the research and technology development (RTD) and management of the project are assured throughout all project activities. This includes but is not limited to:

**Vacancies:** Open positions will be announced nationally and/or internationally in relevant outlets, social media (e.g., LinkedIn), and the project website. The partner hiring and its equal opportunity team may consult the PSC on the top-3 candidates.

**Precautionary measures in case of sexual harassment & abuse:** A clear policy against sexual and other forms of harassment and abuse is inherent to FrontAg Nexus. Furthermore, the statement regarding sexual harassment, drafted with the guidance of Stichting Women Engage for a Common Future – International (WECF) is giving reference to the consortium members (**Figure 5**).

As part of the Ethics Framework, contact persons and reporting procedures will be established as to whom persons who wish to report grievances can address themselves. The reporting procedures will ensure that members of the Coordination Team are informed, and that immediate action can be taken.

**Sexual harassment** is defined as an unwelcome conduct of sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated. It includes situations where a person is asked to engage in sexual activity as a condition of that person's employment or other dependency situations, as well as situations which create an environment which is hostile, intimidating or humiliating for the recipient, such as, for example, sexually charged jokes.

All partners of the FrontAg Nexus project agreed to display a zero-tolerance policy for any form of sexual harassment (or any other form of harassment, abuse, or bullying), to treat all incidents seriously and to promptly investigate all allegations of harassment, abuse, or bullying. Any person found to have sexually harassed another person will face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment or removal from the consortium.

All complaints of sexual misconduct will be taken seriously and treated with respect and in confidence. Partners of the FrontAg Nexus project will not tolerate any negative treatment in the workplace of persons making such a complaint. Measures will be taken to protect the aggrieved person. Furthermore, the consent of the aggrieved and reporting person will be sought in all steps of investigation of the alleged perpetrator. This includes external and formal reporting on extreme and criminal conducts such as rape and violence.

**Figure 5: Statement about non-tolerance of sexual or any other form of harassment**

### 3.2.4 Inclusion and empowerment of women, young adults, and refugees

The project's Ethical Framework will underscore the objective to promote an inclusive approach to the development of women, young adults (in the range of 18 to 35 years of age), and refugees. It seeks to promote equity and equality, including working to eliminate all forms of discrimination. Key actions are needed to engage women, young adults, and refugees (in the following the term vulnerable groups will be used) in ensuring their active participation, empowerment and holistic engagement in FrontAg Nexus actions:

**Responsiveness:** The WP and Task leaders shall respond to the needs and concerns of vulnerable groups to harness their human potential for sustainable development in view of the WEFE Nexus.

**Access:** Vulnerable groups shall be supported and encouraged to access the demonstration cases and related capacity building while ensuring equal opportunities for all stakeholders.

**Participation:** Vulnerable groups shall be involved in advocacy and behavioral change processes that may affect them and the wider community.

**Inclusion:** The main impediment to vulnerable groups' active participation in frontier agricultural actions shall be addressed in surveys and capacity-building to support their direct and indirect inclusion.

**Integration:** All project stakeholders shall be required to cooperate and coordinate their efforts to create synergy in supporting the development of vulnerable groups.

**Diversity:** Particularly the more development orientated demonstration cases will engage participants, i.e., vulnerable groups from different backgrounds and cultures without prejudice.

**Empowerment:** Vulnerable groups shall be empowered to take control of their own lives and destiny and to take full responsibility for their actions while triggering positive change.

**Equality:** Vulnerable groups shall be given equal respect, opportunity, dignity regardless of their place of origin, ethnic or socio-economic status, physical and mental capacity, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability as well as other vulnerabilities.

## 3.3 Project meetings

Project meetings will be scheduled on a regular basis, as indicated in [Table 1](#), to monitor progress and oversee project management. General Assemblies and PSC meetings will ideally take place on the same date and therefore will be virtual or face-to-face meetings. All other meetings will be conducted primarily via MS Teams or telephone conference call. The meetings of the coordination Team are scheduled to take place weekly or bi-weekly.

In each meeting/consortium body, a chairperson shall take the lead in organizing the meetings ([Table 1](#)). The chairperson writes or appoints a representative to write the minutes of the meetings (online meetings may be recorded, then the recording represents the minutes), which are then distributed to all partners and made available on the repository on MS teams if there are no objections. A schedule for the meetings of the General Assembly is provided in [Table 2](#), whereby a deviation from the planned locations is possible.

The chairperson will notify each partner in writing (e.g., by email) of a meeting as soon as possible and not later than the minimum number of days prior to the meeting, as indicated in [Table 3](#). In case of extraordinary meetings, the General Assembly and PSC meetings could also be organized in digital format to ensure participation of all partners.

More detailed information about meeting regulations is provided in the CA (Art. 6.3).

Any party, which is a member of a consortium body:

- must be represented at any meeting of that consortium body;

- may appoint a substitute or a proxy to attend and vote at any meeting;
- should participate in meetings in a spirit of cooperation.

**Table 1: Types and frequency of meetings within FrontAg Nexus**

Type of meeting	Frequency of meeting	Chairperson	Participants	Called in by whom?
General Assembly	At least once a year	CO (P1)	CO, Co-CO, Principal investigators of consortium partners, WP leaders for WP sessions	At any time upon written request of the PSC or 1/3 of the members of the GA
PSC	At least biannually	CO (P1)	CO, Co-CO, QM, DCM, Project-Ethics Manager, Principal investigators, IEA as need arises	At any time upon written request of any member of the PSC
WP meetings	At least every 2 months	To be decided	WP leaders	At any time upon written request by WP leaders, CO or PSC
Demonstration case meetings	Every week	APM (P2)	Partners with demonstration cases and consortium partners involved in capacity building	Decision taken by consortium during KOM
Other	-	-	CO, WP leaders for WP sessions	At any time upon written request of any partner

**Table 2: Schedule for meetings of the General Assembly**

Year	Number	Location
2023	General Assembly 1 (Kick-off Meeting), Month 1	Istanbul, Türkiye
2024	General Assembly 2, ~ Month 16	To be decided
2025	General Assembly 3, ~ Month 32	To be decided
Notes: Possible locations for the 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> general assembly are Italy, Jordan, and Morocco.		

**Table 3: Prior notice to a meeting**

Meeting type	Ordinary meeting	Extraordinary meeting
General Assembly	45 calendar days	15 calendar days
PSC	14 calendar days	7 calendar days
Other	-	At any time upon written request of any partner

## 4 Project management

### 4.1 Reference documents

#### 4.1.1 Description of the action (DoA)

The so-called description of action (DoA) is the main reference for the execution of the PRIMA project FrontAg Nexus. The DoA is the updated project proposal and is part of the Grant Agreement as **Annex 1**. It is recommended that each person involved in the project have a printed copy of the DoA at hand



for quick reference and to check the compliance of the measures. All activities/measures to be implemented must be consistent with the actions outlined in DoA. Whenever a potential deviation of project activities from the DoA is perceived, the CO and/or Co-CO must be informed immediately. The DoA can only be modified by an amendment that must be submitted to and approved by the Project Officer. The Grant Agreement is available on FrontAg Nexus-MS Teams for registered users.<sup>2</sup> **Annex 2** of the Grant Agreement shows the maximum financial contribution to each consortium partner by PRIMA.

#### 4.1.2 Consortium Agreement (CA)

The CA is a private agreement (contract) between the project beneficiaries. The CA defines the rights and obligations between them. It does not involve the EC or an EC agency and complements the Grant Agreement but must not contain any provision contrary to it.

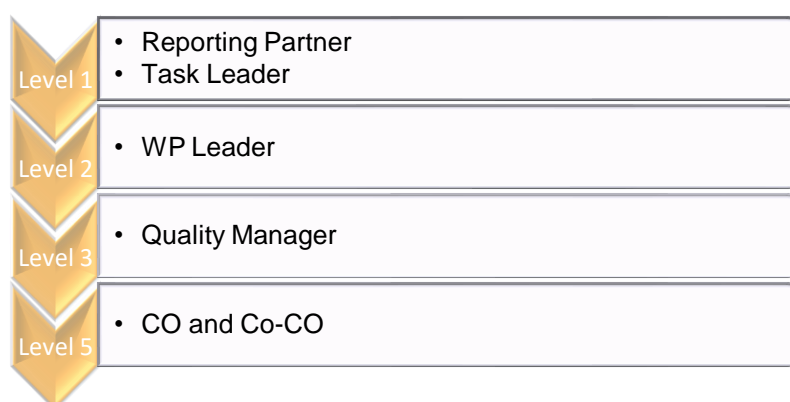
In addition to issues such as responsibilities and liabilities of the beneficiaries as well as a more detailed governance structure than in the Grant Agreement, the CA includes regulations on ownership and exploitation of results and details on the management of intellectual property (e.g., access rights). The CA has been signed by all beneficiaries and is available on FrontAg Nexus-MS Teams for registered users.

#### 4.1.3 Project Management Plan (PMP)

The Project Management Plan (PMP; D5.1, due in Month 3) is, together with the Grant Agreement, one of the main reference documents for FrontAg Nexus partners. As a reference for management activities and processes, the PMP aims to provide the consortium with rules for project management and therefore serves as a guideline on management processes.

#### 4.1.4 Quality assurance

The quality assurance structure addresses the quality review and verification of project deliverables and ensures that the project actions and results follow good research practices. Quality review will be conducted at different levels, as illustrated in the project's quality chain (**Figure 6**).



**Figure 6: Overall quality chain of FrontAg Nexus**

<sup>2</sup> During the KOM, the partners decided to use MS Teams (hosted by UNIBO, P5) for digital meetings as well as for joint working and storing shared documents like templates, deliverables, and reports.

The overall quality assurance approach provides a common framework for effective communication, documentation, identification and correction of deviations throughout the project, e.g., by offering:

- Procedures for reporting and deliverables,
- Templates for deliverables, reports, minutes, etc.,
- Procedures for the review and distribution of various types of deliverables, reports, prototypes, and demonstrations.

**Quality assurance of milestones and deliverables:** Every project milestone and deliverable aims to illustrate progress in and results of the project actions. The highest possible quality of milestones and deliverables is to be assured. This is documented, on the one hand, in the deliverable reports as part of the continuous reporting. On the other hand, it is documented in the periodic reports, to be submitted of PRIMA. Reporting is taking place through the MEL platform (<https://mel.cgiar.org/user/login>).

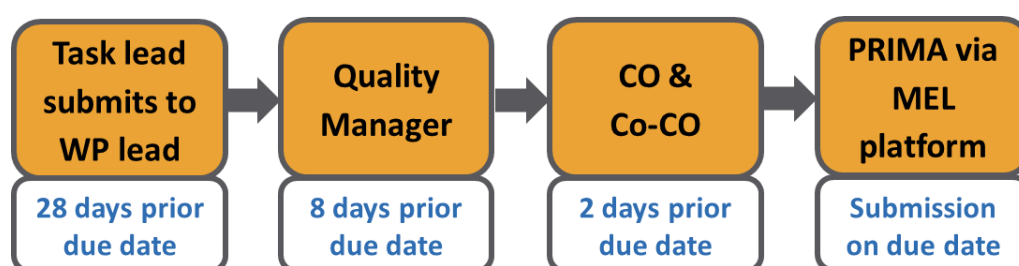
Deliverables must be written in English; they are part of the DoA and submission dates to PRIMA/EC are compulsory. The MEL platform contains sections showing all relevant information (lead partners and due dates) for deliverables and milestones. All WP leaders and Task leaders shall ensure that changes in the technical implementation are monitored and that any effects on other areas of the project are considered and reported to the Coordination Team. All partners are responsible for the complete and accurate completion of all the requested documents and for ensuring that every person working on the project is familiar with the quality criteria, procedures and templates. The use of project templates with pre-defined format is mandatory.

To ensure high quality research, an internal reviewing procedure has been defined, nominating reviewers for reports generated within a WP and deliverable. Reviewers are listed in the table at the beginning of each deliverable to keep track with the proofreading progress. The quality chain not only consists of the relevant Task leaders and WP Leaders, but also of the Quality Manager and/or the Ethical Manager; the final review is done by the CO and Co-CO.

**Submission procedure for deliverables and milestones:** The following procedure will ensure the timely submission and the quality of deliverables submitted to PRIMA/EC as defined in the Grant Agreement (Annex 1), respectively in **Figure 3** of this PMR.

For each deliverable and milestone, the reporting person submits the relevant document(s) as draft versions to the Task leader and WP leader. After this first review, the document will be forwarded to the responsible persons in the quality chain in line with the time schedule in **Figure 7**. In brief the quality chain consists of the following steps:

- Quality Chain (Task Lead – WP Lead – Quality Manager – CO/Co-CO)



**Figure 7: Quality management and submission schedule of deliverables**

The reporting partner continuously informs the quality chain members about all revisions by setting the CO in the mailing exchange. The person in charge of the deliverable is responsible for the time management of the submission schedule and the content of the deliverable. The final version must be

submitted to the CO at least 2 days before the submission to PRIMA. Consortium members accept/approve a deliverable automatically if there are no suggestions for changes or rejections sent to the CO. After the approval of the final version, the deliverable will be uploaded in the MEL Portal by the CO.

**Layout of Deliverables:** The use of the templates provided by the WP6 lead and DCM (FSH, P3) for deliverables, milestones, internal reporting, and periodic reports is obligatory, templates are available in MS Teams (WP5).

All reports should include a summary that describes the work performed. In the main text, the objectives of the Task/WP according to the DoA and actions/activities performed shall be presented with clear and measurable details, while highlighting the achieved results.

Each deliverable must consist of the following sections:

- Front Page with deliverable name and number;
- Second page with name of author, deliverable number, dissemination level (e.g., public, sensitive) and an abstract on the deliverable's content;
- List of beneficiaries, affiliated entities, and associated partners;
- Table of Contents;
- List of Figures (if applicable);
- List of Tables (if applicable);
- List of Acronyms (if applicable);
- Main text according to the table of contents;
- References (if applicable).

All figures and tables are to be labelled in an appropriate and clear manner with respective numbering. References to citations and sources/literature should follow the guidelines established by the American Psychological Association (APA) (<https://www.mendeley.com/guides/apa-citation-guide/>).

It is recommended to prepare the reports in due diligence with regards to formatting from an initial draft stage onwards to minimize the workload before the deadline. This encompasses layout, complete lists and content table, consistency in the use of capital letters at the beginning of words, and abbreviation list. All abbreviations must be given in full on the first occasion that they are used in the text, even if there is a "List of Abbreviations".

**Presentations:** It is recommended to use the template for presentation and graphs provided by WP6 lead and DCM (FSH, P3) for presentations related to the project. More details about the templates for dissemination and communication activities will be set out in Deliverable D6.1 – Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication Plan & Reports I due in month 6.

## 4.2 MEL Platform for project and financial management

Prior to the start (May 01, 2023) of three-year FrontAg Nexus project, all relevant information (partners, DoA, deliverables, milestones, deadlines, etc.) have been entered in the MEL platform by the CO.

Continues and periodic reporting of FrontAg Nexus to PRIMA is done on the digital [MEL Platform](https://mel.cgiar.org) (<https://mel.cgiar.org>; see **Figure 8**). Continuous reporting can be done at any time during the life of the project.



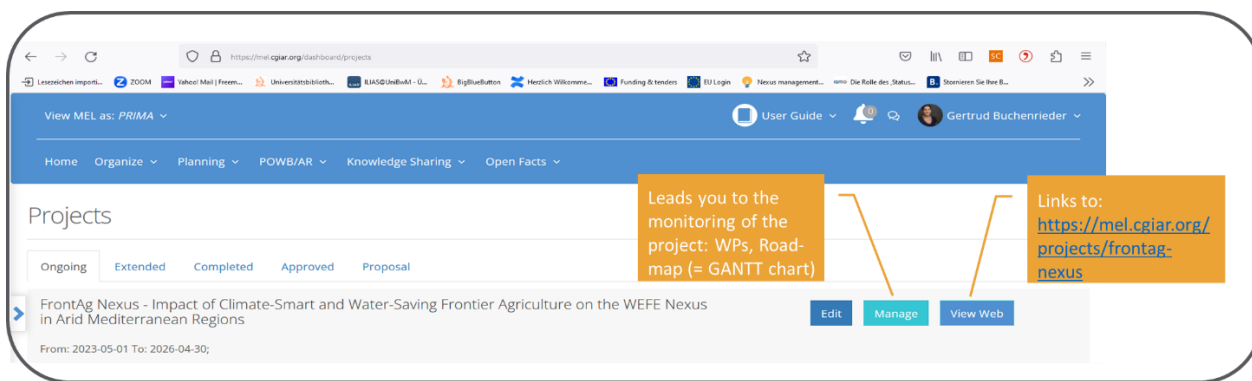


Figure 8: Digital MEL Platform of PRIMA

Deliverables and other reports will be uploaded to the MEL Platform. The MEL Platform also provides a possibility to overview the project with the integrated work breakdown structure, a Gantt chart, which is called Roadmap in the MEL Platform (Figure 9). The Roadmap depicts the complete project structure according to the Grant Agreement (DoA in Annex 1). The project structure comprises the WPs, Deliverables, Tasks, Milestones, and their deadlines.

It is obligatory for all beneficiaries to keep their participant profiles and expenditures in the MEL Platform up to date, and update their data particularly before each General Assembly and interim as well as final reporting. Therefore, it is recommended that all partners familiarize themselves with the workflow monitoring of the MEL Platform.

For more information on the MEL Platform, please refer to the presentation at the KOM of the Project Officer, Prof. Dr. Ali Rhouma (see MS Teams, WP6 > General Assembly > KOM).

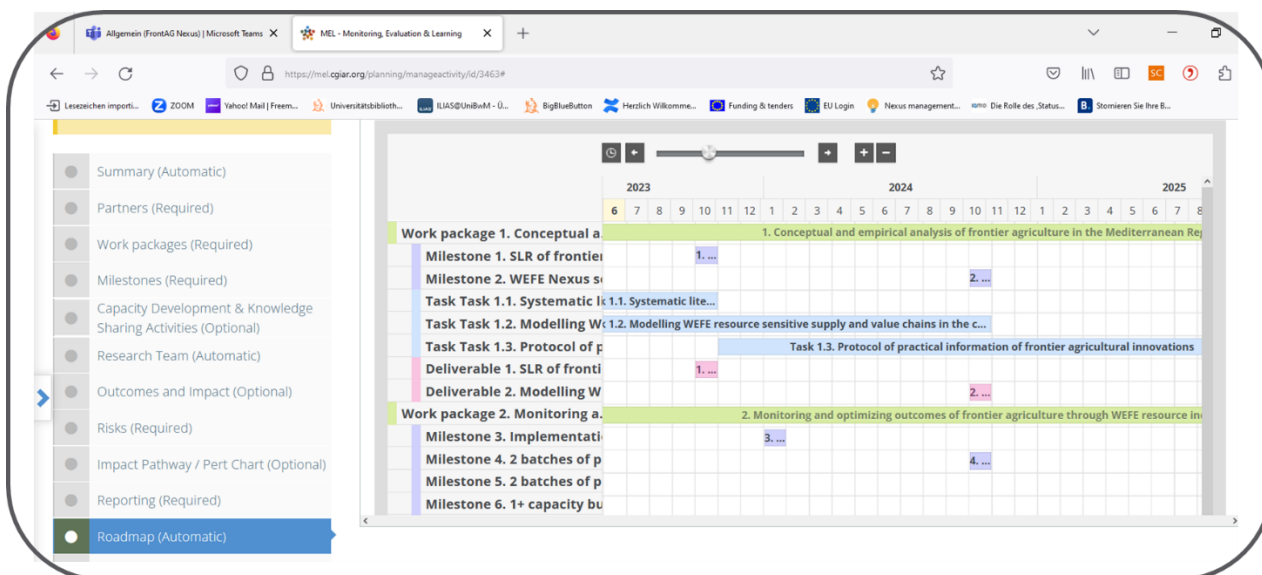


Figure 9: Excerpt of the roadmap in the MEL Platform

### 4.3 Periodic reporting

The reporting obligations of FrontAg Nexus vis-à-vis PRIMA/EC are laid out in the **Grant Agreement, Art. 20**. Information is also available in the presentation at the KOM of the Project Officer, Prof. Dr. Ali Rhouma (see MS Teams, WP6 > General Assembly > KOM).

The project is divided into two reporting periods (Figure 10):

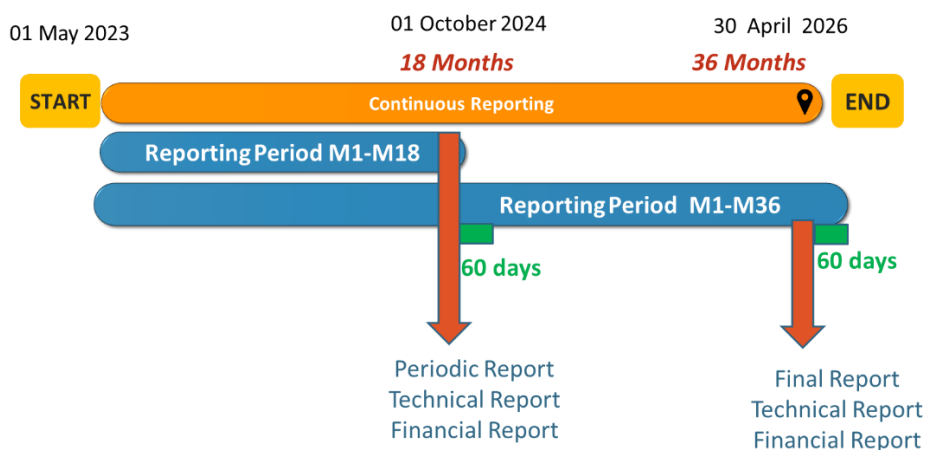
- Reporting Period 1 (**Interim Report**): Month 1 to month 18 (May 2023 to Sept. 2024)
- Reporting Period 2 (**Final Report**): Month 19 to month 36 (Oct. 2024 to April 2026)

Following the end of the reporting period, the CO/Co-CO must submit the report within 60 days (see green bar in Figure 10). The reports to be submitted include a technical and a financial report.

#### 4.3.1 Periodic technical report

The technical report consists of two parts, Part A & B. **Part A** contains a publishable summary and details of the continuous reporting, which is based on the information entered in the MEL Platform by the beneficiaries throughout the project duration. Part A is generated by the portal's IT system. Continuous reporting comprises the submission of deliverables, reporting on progress in achieving milestones, following up on critical risks, ethics issues, publications, and communication and dissemination activities.

**Part B** is a single PDF document that includes the narrative part, explaining the work carried out per WP and partner and documenting all deviations (per task and regarding the use of resources). Part B follows the template of Part B Periodic Technical Report (see Annex 7 of Grant Agreement and reporting module of MEL Platform). Part B of the interim report should not exceed 35 pages and the final report should not exceed 50 pages. Due to the page constraints, there is no need to repeat what has already been mentioned in the deliverables, it is enough to make a reference to the corresponding deliverable. In line of the above-described reporting obligations, it is the duty of all beneficiaries to continuously enter the above-mentioned information in the MEL Portal, and additionally provide a document containing an overview of the progress and work carried out according to the DoA (Annex 1) and Annex 2 (financial resources) of the Grant Agreement. Deviations from the tasks, resources, etc. and – if applicable – updates on exploitation and dissemination as well as data management are to be reported.



**Figure 10: Reporting timeline and types of reports**

Source: Rhouma, A. (2023): FrontAg Nexus PRIMA Reporting and monitoring. Presentation of Project Officer. Istanbul, Türkiye: Kick-off meeting, June 01, 2023.

#### 4.3.2 Periodic financial report

The periodic financial report is the global explanation of the use of financial resources and is done direction on the MEL Platform. The so-called Planning Financial Table has been entered by the CO to the MEL Platform. It corresponds to Annex 2 of the Grant Agreement.

#### 4.3.2.1 Eligible and ineligible direct costs

The **Grant Agreement, Art. 6** explains **eligible and ineligible direct costs**. The term 'direct' implies that the costs reported are directly linked to the action implementation.

The financial report covers the costs/expenses incurred during the entire periodic reporting period (respectively the entire implementation period) of the project. Importantly, reported costs must be actually incurred by the beneficiary during the reporting period and for the action. The costs must comply with applicable national laws on taxes, labor and social security, and comply with the principle of sound financial management (see presentation of Financial Officer on MS Teams, WP5, General Assembly, KOM).

Each beneficiary must upload a signed individual financial statement to beneficiary's financial section. Each beneficiary received 60% of the maximum PRIMA contribution as pre-financing amount (Art. 21 of Grant Agreement), in total 1,807,407 euro.

The periodic financial report consists of the individual financial statements for each beneficiary, an explanation of the use of resources and the information on subcontracting and in-kind contributions provided by third parties from each beneficiary. **Table 4** explains the cost categories. Each beneficiary is responsible for its budget and accounting. To facilitate the overview of costs, each beneficiary is asked to continuously enter project related expenditures, particularly 'purchase costs' on the MEL platform.

A periodic financial statement including the request for interim payment will be created automatically by the IT-system in the MEL Platform. At the end of the project duration, beneficiaries claiming more than a total amount of 430,000 euro (incl. indirect costs) must provide a Certificate on the Financial Statement (CFS). CFS must be submitted jointly with the final periodic report and performed by an approved external independent auditor.

#### 4.3.2.2 Conversion into euro by non-euro partner countries

The financial reporting is done in euro. Beneficiaries with general accounts established in a currency other than the euro must convert the costs recorded in their accounts into euro for the financial statements. The procedure is as follows ([H2020 AMGA](#), Chapter 4, Article 20, p.191):

(1) If a daily euro exchange rate is published in the Official Journal of the European Union, then the costs are converted using the average of the daily exchange rates published, **calculated over the corresponding reporting period**.

This applies to Israel and Türkiye in FrontAg Nexus. Use the following link (see presentation of Finance Officer on MS Teams, WP5, General Assembly/KOM):

[https://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/policy\\_and\\_exchange\\_rates/euro\\_reference\\_exchange\\_rates/html/index.en.html](https://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/policy_and_exchange_rates/euro_reference_exchange_rates/html/index.en.html)

(2) If no daily euro exchange rate is published in the Official Journal of the European Union for the currency in question, the costs must be converted at the average of the monthly accounting exchange rate published on the European Commission website inforEUro, **calculated over the corresponding reporting period**.

This applies to Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia in FrontAg Nexus. Use the following link:

[https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-inforeuro\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-inforeuro_en)

Currency exchange losses (i.e. for beneficiaries using currencies other than euros) or being invoiced in a currency other than the currency they use, any loss due to exchange rate fluctuations (e.g., between the date of invoicing and the date of payment) are ineligible costs (**Grant Agreement, Art. 6.5**).

**Table 4: Cost categories and required input in the cost/financial statements**

Cost Category	Explanation/justification needed in the financial statement
A. Direct personnel costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff working for the project (fully, partly)</li> <li>Main tasks of people working on the project</li> <li>Person-months of each person working on the project</li> <li>Timesheets</li> </ul>
B. Direct costs of subcontracting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature and purpose of subcontract</li> <li>Link with project activities (action item)</li> <li>Action and expenditures foreseen listed in Annex 1 (Table 3.4 c)</li> </ul>
C. Direct costs of financial support	<b>Not foreseen in the Planning Financial Table in Annex 2 of the Grant Agreement.</b>
D. Other direct costs	
→ D.1 Travel and Subsistence	<p>More than one person per beneficiary travelling to the same type of event must be justified. Follow the same travel rules in the project that are already applying in your organization. For each journey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name(s) of person(s) travelling</li> <li>Function in the project</li> <li>Destination</li> <li>Date (dd/mm/yyyy) / Duration</li> <li>Contribution (e.g., project meeting, presentation, poster, lecturer)</li> </ul>
→ D.2 Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Date of purchase</li> <li>Full price (excl. VAT)</li> <li>Depreciation duration applied (in months), follow rules of your organization</li> <li>% of use of the item for the project</li> <li>Type of equipment (precise description) and link with the project's activity</li> </ul>
→ D.3 Other goods, works and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature and purpose of these goods and services</li> <li>Link with the project's activity</li> <li>Demonstrate best value for money (e.g., request of several offers) and no conflict of interest</li> </ul>
→ D.4 Costs of large research infrastructure	<b>Not foreseen in the Planning Financial Table in Annex 2 of the Grant Agreement.</b>
→ D.5 Costs of internally invoice goods and services	<p><b>Not foreseen in the Planning Financial Table in Annex 2 of the Grant Agreement.</b></p> <p><a href="#">AMGA</a>, p.101: „Internally invoiced goods and services means goods or services which are provided by the beneficiary directly for the action and which the beneficiary values on the basis of its usual cost accounting practices”, e.g. self-produced consumables (chemicals)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use of specific research facilities (e.g., lab),</li> <li>specialised premises for hosting research specimens used for the action (e.g., animal house, green house, aquarium),</li> <li>- hosting services for visiting researchers participating in the action.</li> </ul>
E. Indirect costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25% flat-rate (“overhead”), added on top of all direct costs (excl. costs of subcontracting) to cover internal costs (e.g., rent, electricity, workspace)</li> </ul>
Note: Annex 2 of the Grant Agreement displays the financial contribution to each beneficiary.	

#### 4.3.2.3 Conversion of non-euro costs in euro partner countries

Beneficiaries with general accounts in euro (i.e., Italy, Germany, Greece) must convert costs incurred in another currency into euro according to their usual accounting practices.

#### 4.3.3 Scheduling of periodic reporting

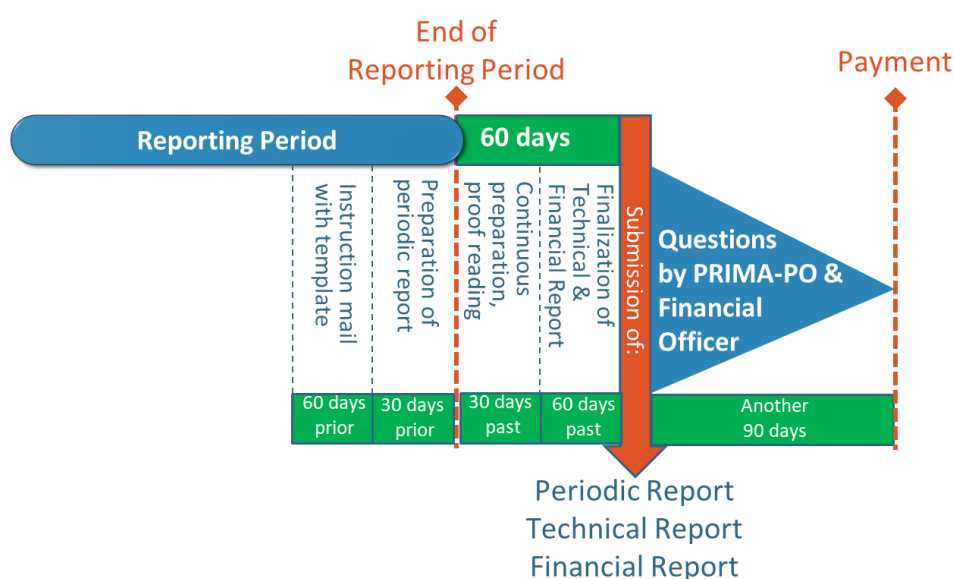
Since the official Periodic Report (incl. technical and financial report) following the reporting periods requires extensive preparation, the schedule outlined in **Figure 11** will be implemented for each reporting period.

Sixty days prior to the end of each reporting period, the Coordination Team will send an e-mail to all partners with instructions and a work schedule (e.g., proof-reading and submission). Thirty days before the end of the reporting period, an online workshop with PSC members and WP leaders will be organized to discuss the technical and financial reporting and to clarify specific questions before the WP leaders start preparing their contributions to the report together with all involved partners.

Within 60 days after the end of the reporting period, both the technical and financial report have to be finalized and submitted. The CO is responsible for the submission to the Technical Report (single PDF) to the MEL Platform.

After submission, PRIMA has 90 days to review and finally to approve the report (**Grant Agreement, Art. 21.3**) before paying the CO the amount due as interim or final payment. Adjustments and revisions can be claimed during this period.

According to the PRIMA guidelines for Submitting Periodic Reports (see MS Teams for a copy), an independent expert will be appointed by PRIMA to evaluate FrontAg Nexus. Thereafter, a remote meeting will be scheduled by PRIMA, during which the WP leaders and the CO give a presentation to explain what has been done within the respective reporting period. Thereafter the external evaluator presents their evaluation.



**Figure 11: Preparation scheduling of periodic reporting**

#### 4.3.4 Youtube guidelines on the use of the MEL Platform

The following videos are useful to get acquainted with different functions of the MEL Platform: (1) [General Introduction](#), (2) [Edit](#), (3) [Manage](#), (4) [Budget](#), and (5) [Reporting](#).

### 4.4 Continuous reporting

Along with the periodic reporting, continuous reporting must be carried out in the MEL Portal. The Coordination Team and WP leaders will consecutively update this section after having received detailed information from all beneficiaries. This information includes a list of publications, deliverables, and dissemination activities amongst others. The list of all deliverables is attached in Annex I: List of deliverables of FrontAg Nexus of this PMP.

### 4.5 Internal reporting

In order to ensure a smooth project implementation, progress and action management is carried out at the WP level. This includes a bi-annual internal reporting of the WP and Task leaders to the PSC.

#### 4.5.1 Progress and risk reports

The progress and eventual risks within each WP will be monitored regularly based on the roadmap (Gantt chart) on the MEL Platform ([Figure 9](#)). Furthermore, the risk table of the DoA (Annex 1 of Grant Agreement) and risk table on the MEL Platform will be updated continuously. Biannually, each WP Leader and project partner will be asked to provide a short and concise report about progress on tasks, deliverables and milestones as well as on the specific objectives and expected outcomes (defined in Grant Agreement, Annex 1, DoA).

#### 4.5.2 Costs and resources statement

The responsibility to manage costs and resources is with each beneficiary individually but they are encouraged to use the MEL Platform throughout as transparent tool to keep track of their expenditures. Therefore, they should submit/update their cost and resources statement twice a year via the MEL Platform. This helps the beneficiary and the Coordination Team to oversee project costs.

Each beneficiary updates the actual expenses (personnel costs, subcontracting, purchase costs etc.) for the given time period. The beneficiaries will also explain any differences between the so-called Planning Financial Table (Annex 2 of Grant Agreement) and actual expenses.

#### 4.5.3 Personnel resources

All beneficiaries are strongly advised to keep time records in the form of timesheets (see MS Teams for copies of timesheets), [Grant Agreement, Art. 18](#). Since only personnel costs for the days worked on the project can be reimbursed, the working time during the entire project period must be documented with a time recording system (for example, in an electronic system or in paper form). The time recording (i.e., timesheets; see MS Teams for sample timesheets) must be dated at least monthly and signed by the employee and his/her/their superior. The EC has introduced a monthly declaration on days spent for the action to be used in H2020 projects. Write down all project hours per WP as accurately as possible (recommended: daily). All beneficiaries are advised to check further requirements: [AMGA](#) p.119. Each beneficiary must use the same time record system for all its current grants.

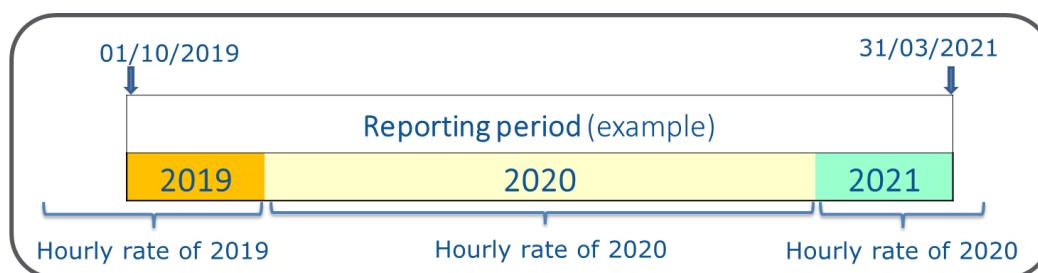


PRIMA advises to record the time worked in hours rather than in days. Beneficiaries can familiarize themselves with the current regulations for the calculation of personnel costs ([AMGA](#) Article 6.2.A Personnel costs).

Further information on **direct personnel costs** can be found in the **Grant Agreement, Art. 6, A.5**. The total number of hours declared in PRIMA grants cannot be higher than the so-called annual productive hours per person working full-time on the project. PRIMA/EC has fixed this number to **1,720 hours** for persons working full-time on the project over one year. Furthermore, PRIMA/EC has fixed the maximum number of working days per year that can be declared: **215 days**. This results in **8 productive hours per day** (on average) or 143.33 hours per month.<sup>3</sup>

On the basis of the fixed maximum number of productive hours per year per full-time person working on the action, the annual hourly rate is to be calculated per full financial year. If the financial year is not closed at the time of reporting, the beneficiary must use the average hourly rate of the last closed financial year available (see [Figure 12](#)). Regular errors regarding the reporting of hours spent on the project include:

- Hours reported for staff working on the project while they are sick or on holiday
- Hours claimed cannot be supported through timesheets
- Impossible number of hours claimed (see maximum number of hours to be claimed, keep in mind that you may have other work to do for your employer too)



**Figure 12: Example for calculating the annual hourly rate for personnel**

Source: Güell, Pau (2023): FrontAg Nexus PRIMA Financial Aspects and Grant Agreement Amendments. Presentation. Financial Officer. Istanbul, Türkiye: Kick-off meeting, June 01, 2023.

Is it possible to calculate the daily/hourly rate for each employee individually and then to convert the individual daily rates from the national currency to euro. This may be advantageous depending on the period the individual employee has worked on the project.

## 4.6 Documentation

All documents related to costs (e.g., timesheets, invoices, tickets, offers and contracts, agenda, photos and presentations of contribution to an event that were attended, meeting minutes) must be accurately filed and stored for at least **5 years after final payment by each beneficiary**. Your administration ought to keep original documents. Within this period and already during the project lifetime, PRIMA/EC may carry out audits.

<sup>3</sup> Obviously, a staff member can work more than 8 hours a day on the project. Nevertheless, the maximum number per full-time staff on the project is fixed by PRIMA/EC to 1,720 hours a year.

## Annexes

### Annex I: List of deliverables of FrontAg Nexus

Deliverable number	Deliverable name	WP number	Short name of lead participant	Type	Dissemination level	Delivery date (in months)
D1.1	SLR of frontag concepts	1	UNIBO	R	PU	6
D1.2	Modelling WEFE resource sensitive supply chains, context frontag	1	UM6P	R	PU	18
D2.1	IP for 10+ demonstration cases	2	EiBosten	DEC, R	PU	9
D2.2	Capacity building: 2 batches of practice abstracts	2	APM	DEC, R	PU	18, 36
D2.3	Monitoring WEFE Nexus KPIs of frontag	2	BGU	R	PU	30
D3.1	Cleaned 3-time-period panel dataset	3	EUROSOLAR Türkiye	Other	PU	31
D3.2	Impact analysis of frontag on livelihoods, WEFE Nexus	3	UniBw M	R	PU	36
D4.1	Joint communiqués and/or policy briefs	4	Bodrum Municipality	R, Other	PU	24, 36
D4.2	Cross-sectoral WEFE Nexus policy roadmap	4	UM6P	R	PU	36
D5.1	Project Management Plan	5	UniBw M	R	PU	3
D5.2	Data Management Plan	5	UniBw M	R	PU	6, 24, 36
D6.1	Dissemination, Exploitation & Communication	6	FSH Greece	R, Other	PU	3, 24, 36
D6.2	FrontAg Nexus Repository	6	FSH Greece	R, DEC	PU	6, 24, 36

Note: frontag = frontier agriculture.

END OF DOCUMENT