Duration:
4 years, November 2024 – November 2028

Collaboration:
27 partners from 11 different countries

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Innovative Solutions for Climate Health Risks and Resilience in the Mediterranean

Overview

The ISMED-CLIM project is a large-scale research consortium of **27 organizations across seven countries,** funded by the HORIZON EUROPE program.

In collaboration with national health systems, research institutions, and regional stakeholders, **ISMED-CLIM aims to develop innovative and timely solutions to address the growing health risks posed by climate change, especially focusing on vulnerable populations in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal.**

Challenges to Address

The Mediterranean is one of Europe's most significant climate change hotspots. Excess deaths and hospitalizations linked to extreme temperatures are highest in southern counties, exacerbated by air pollution, especially among older adults and socially disadvantaged groups.

The region's average temperature rise surpasses the global average, with extreme heat, floods, and forest fires increasingly impacting health outcomes. Key challenges include:

- **Heat Exposure:** Adverse effects such as mental and heat stress, dehydration, sleep disturbances, and hypertension disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, including outdoor workers, pregnant women, and the elderly. Existing response plans have proven insufficient to prevent these impacts.
- **Air Pollution:** Air pollution is one of the leading causes of premature death worldwide. The mediterranean countries experience high levels of anthropogenic air pollutants and are also affected by frequent desert dust storms events.
- **Vector-Borne/Zoonotic Diseases:** Accounting for an important fraction of all infectious diseases, these are significantly influenced by climate change and external factors. Vector population dynamics and distribution of pathogens is especially affected by increasing temperatures.
- **Healthcare System Vulnerability:** Climate change increases healthcare demand, disrupts infrastructure, raises costs, and threatens the provision of quality care.

Our Objectives

- **Enhancing Climate Resilience:** By increasing knowledge of climate-health impacts and engaging local stakeholders, ISMED-CLIM will adapt evidence-based practices and tools to strengthen the preparedness and capacity of Mediterranean health systems to address climate challenges.
- **Developing AI-Driven Tools:** Using a One Health approach, ISMED-CLIM will create and test an integrated surveillance tool and Early Warning System for managing zoonotic disease prevention and interventions.
- **Fostering Systemic Transformation:** ISMED-CLIM's ultimate goal is to reinforce health systems and enable the scalability of solutions across the Mediterranean. By developing replicable policies, procedures, and tools, the project seeks to drive systemic reforms in environmental and public health.

Target Populations and Deliverables

Outdoor Workers (Greece, Spain): Reducing heat-related illness risks in the occupational setting.

Pregnant Women (Italy, Cyprus): Mitigating impacts of air pollution and heat on maternal and fetal health.

Older Adults with Hypertension (Spain, Cyprus): Monitoring cardiovascular health in a highly sensitive population.

Zoonotic Disease Surveillance (Portugal): Protecting animals, their carers, and high risk professionals from leishmaniasis transmitted via phlebotomine sand flies.

Healthcare Systems Toolkit (Cyprus): Adapt a comprehensive, climate-resilient toolkit for hospitals in the Mediterranean.