**UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Blue Economy**

**Tuesday, 2 February 2021, 09:00-12:00**

**CIHEAM Position note**

Taking consideration of the major challenges of the Mediterranean and its fields of expertise, the CIHEAM identified four priority areas of action: **i.** sustainable food systems; **ii.** coastal zone management and fisheries; **iii.** socio-economic empowerment and inclusion of women; **vi.** Socio-economic empowerment and inclusion of youth.

They are part of the [CIHEAM Strategic Agenda 2025](https://www.ciheam.org/detailed-news/projects/about-us/our-history/our-priorities/) adopted by the Governing Board and during the 11th Ministerial meeting of the CIHEAM Member States (Tirana 2016). The CIHEAM Strategic Agenda 2025 is aimed at contributing to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Mediterranean region. It also enables a better readability of the activities of the CIHEAM by placing them on the international agenda for cooperation and development.

The action of the CIHEAM in these major areas of development that the recent crisis has also brought to the forefront (food security, rural poverty, role of women) is particularly expected by cooperation stakeholders and by institutional partners (EC, FAO, UfM, etc.).

Regarding the general dimensions of development deeply linked with coastal zone management and fisheries, the CIHEAM fully supports the attention drawn to issues such as capacity-building, **empowerment of women in the sectors in relation with the coastal zone and marine resources**, the role of **aquaculture and fisheries as a job provider for youth**, the promotion of **human mobility** and the contribution of coastal zones and fisheries to **biodiversity** and the fight against **climate change**.

The CIHEAM can play a major role in connecting both **cooperation and political dialogue** on the one side and specific training and research on coastal management, aquaculture and fisheries on the other, because all these activities have been equally paramount for the CIHEAM for nearly 60 years.

The CIHEAM and its four institutes[[1]](#footnote-1) have a strong training programme of Masters and Advances courses for professionals and coordinate and participate in different cooperation and research projects.

**CIHEAM Working Group on Coastal Zone Management and Fisheries**

Aiming to coordinate objectives and increase synergies, in 2019 the CIHEAM decided to create an institutional Working Group on Coastal Zone Management and Fisheries (CIHEAM WG-CZMF). The main initiative for 2021 of this Working Group is to develop an **holistic analysis of the priorities and needs for Coastal Zone Management and Fisheries** in the Mediterranean, and the **impact of the coronavirus crisis** on this field. The analysis should be implemented through a consultation process involving all relevant actors involved at international and national levels. The final output will be a reference document of the “State of Coastal Zone Management and Fisheries in the Mediterranean”.

In line with the objectives of this **Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Blue Economy** the CIHEAM aims to contribute to intensifying join efforts, activities and projects in various blue economy while addressing the growing environmental and climate-related challenges that the Mediterranean region is currently facing, and tackling the unprecedented socio-economic crisis that the COVID-19 pandemic has generated.

On this regard, CIHEAM, FAO and UfM, have joined forces to support the co-development of an [**SFS-MED Platform**](https://www.ciheam.org/agendas/promoting-food-systems-transformation-in-the-mediterranean-towards-2030/), within a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on 14 January 2021. The purpose to provide a framework for collaboration among interested stakeholder to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through collaborative actions to support the shift towards more sustainable food systems in the Mediterranean region.

On November 2020 CIHEAM signed a Contribution agreement with the Italian Ministry of Agriculture to support the realisation of the SFS-MED Platform project, in particular for more **sustainable fisheries and agro-food systems in the Mediterranean**. This platform will be realised by the CIHEAM-Bari in collaboration with the other Institutes of the CIHEAM.

Enhancing the sustainability and resilience of small-scale fishers, fish farmers and fish workers is essential to reducing poverty, improving nutrition and creating decent work, among other Sustainable Development Goals. However, transitioning food systems away from “business as usual” to more sustainable practices require significant technical expertise.

The SFS-MED Platform will serve to raise awareness on the central role of the sustainable food systems in the achievement of 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in the Mediterranean region, with particular regards to the **centrality of the fisheries in the Mediterranean food systems.**

Sustainable food systems are key elements for promoting blue growth as well as green and circular economy, on both shores of the Mediterranean region, by building innovation-approaches and improving well-being and social equity, while lessening environmental risks and ecological scarcities. In this regard, it is paramount to safeguard the position of fishers in the value chain.

There is a need to provide an active support for local fishing, throughout the **supply chain, “from hook to plate”**, as well as for local farmers, throughout the supply chain, **“from farm to fork**”, through promotions, traceability and certifications, to enhance the product as much as possible in the eyes of the consumer.

1. The 4 Institutes [CIHEAM-Bari](http://www.iamb.ciheam.org/), [CIHEAM-Chania](http://www.iamc.ciheam.org/), [CIHEAM-Montpellier](http://www.iamm.ciheam.org/), and [CIHEAM-Zaragoza](http://www.iamz.ciheam.org/) conduct most of the **CIHEAM's educational, research and cooperation activities**. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)