

Annual Report 2025



CIHEAM

International Center for Advanced
Mediterranean Agronomic Studies

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Teodoro Miano



Message from the Secretary General



United by its culture and millennia-old heritage, the Mediterranean region is nevertheless subject to multiple tensions and pressures. As one of the world's climate hotspots, with temperature increases nearly 20% higher than the global average, it is experiencing severe soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, deterioration in water quality and access, warming and rising sea levels, and the weakening of agri-food systems and rural areas. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly vulnerable to crises and extreme events. Besides, the devastating conflicts currently afflicting certain countries in our region have plunged most vulnerable populations into a severe humanitarian crisis, exposing the shortcomings of the international community's response and underscoring the urgent need for stronger, more decisive and sustained support.

However, beyond its fragilities, the Mediterranean is a hub of cooperation, mobility and cultural diversity. It is a **'positive' laboratory for the world**, capable of anticipating, experimenting and proposing global solutions to food, climate and social challenges.

In this context, the CIHEAM has been working for nearly 63 years, alongside its many partners, to strengthen the resilience of food systems, sustainable agricultural development and the balance of rural and coastal areas.

The past year fully illustrates this ambition.

Through its training and education activities, the CIHEAM continues to train the experts, researchers and decision-makers of tomorrow. The CIHEAM Institutes offer unique spaces for learning and exchange, where students, teachers and professionals share their experiences and work together to develop responses tailored to the realities of the Mediterranean region. They are also venues where numerous events, conferences and seminars, bringing together the main international stakeholders, to debate and nourish the future vision and the objectives of the international cooperation of the years to come.

We are not just an academic institution; we are a **regional catalyst**. Our ambition is to transform scientific excellence into diplomatic stability, ensuring that **the Mediterranean of tomorrow is governed by those who have learned to solve problems together today**.

As such, considerable emphasis is placed on research and innovation. The CIHEAM is involved in numerous projects promoting **scientific diplomacy** and contributing, through its extensive network of experts, to the production of knowledge, the development of innovative solutions and the strengthening of links between science, public policy and actors in the field. In this perspective, scientific information and scientific diplomacy are not only a tool for understanding: they become a lever for action, helping to anticipate risks, establish shared baselines and support operational responses.

At the same time, cooperation and development projects demonstrate our commitment to Mediterranean countries and communities. By mobilising public institutions, civil society and the private sector, these initiatives strengthen **local capacities**, support the modernisation of agricultural sectors and promote sustainable regional development.

A solid pillar of our strategy is the cross-cutting engagement of youth and women, recognizing them as the primary architects of regional resilience. In 2025, we have focused our efforts on providing women with the tools needed for economic independence. This effort has culminated in a strategic roadmap for 2026, ensuring that the CIHEAM plays a fundamental role in the **International Year of Rural Women** by generating tangible opportunities from shared institutional commitments.

At a time when challenges are striving, cooperation in the Mediterranean is more necessary than ever, and the CIHEAM will remain a key actor in Euro-Mediterranean dialogue, working to promote food security, sustainability and regional cooperation. The autumn of 2026 will be marked by a **CIHEAM ministerial meeting** where Mediterranean policy makers will discuss future solutions to the many agricultural and food challenges.

This annual report reflects the ongoing commitment of our teams and our warmest thanks to partners, organizations and countries for their essential contribution to the collective mission of a strong and cohesive Mediterranean.

Teodoro Miano,
Secretary General of the CIHEAM



OUR HISTORY



Founded in 1962, the CIHEAM (International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies) is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to sustainable agriculture, fisheries, food systems, and rural development. Its activities are based on education and capacity building, research, diplomacy, and field cooperation.

Originally focused on training senior professionals from Mediterranean countries, the CIHEAM quickly became a pioneer in student and young researcher mobility. As a unique space combining science and diplomacy, the CIHEAM has made the exchange of knowledge and skills a driving force in strengthening the region's agri-food systems.

This ambition was made possible thanks to Louis Malassis, a French agronomist who established an innovative educational approach, especially by creating—more than 40 years ago—the international Master's system within the Institutes.

From the vision of two pioneers...

Like Fernand Braudel, the Spanish agronomist and diplomat Ramón Esteruelas saw the Mediterranean not only as a shared civilization but also as a space for cooperation, enriched by its cultural blends and complementarities. This vision was further reinforced by the Italian Carlo Scarascia Mugnozza, former European Commissioner for Agriculture, who worked toward extending collaboration to the neighbours of the southern and eastern shores in order to address Mediterranean challenges and foster collective ambitions.

... stemmed the creation of a unique space.

This vision, championed by pioneering figures and reinforced by the commitment of many others, helped lay the foundation for Mediterranean political dialogue as early as the 1960s and established food security as a priority for co-development.

Key dates:

1958

The OEEC (former OECD) recommends the creation of an international postgraduate training centre for Mediterranean agriculture

1962

Establishment of the **CIHEAM Bari** and **CIHEAM Montpellier** Institutes

22 MAI

1962

Creation of the CIHEAM

1963-65

France, Greece Italy and Spain ratify the founding treaty

Accession of Portugal, Türkiye and Yugoslavia

1967

1986-89

Accession of **Egypt, Algeria and Malta**. Establishment of the **CIHEAM Chania Institute**

1985

The CIHEAM expands southwards with the accession of **Tunisia**

1969

Establishment of the **CIHEAM Zaragoza Institute**

1990

Accession of **Morocco**

▶ 2025

1992-94

Accession of **Albania** and **Lebanon**

2022

The CIHEAM celebrates its **60th anniversary**

Towards enlargement to new Member States



The CIHEAM Bari (Italy)

develops activities focused on sustainable management of natural resources, the development of sustainable food systems such as the Mediterranean Diet, and the promotion of climate-resilient agro-ecological ecosystems. Its work also covers food security, precision agriculture, youth and women entrepreneurship, and the development of innovation ecosystems. Its annex in Tricase is dedicated to the blue economy and the integrated management of coastal areas.

The CIHEAM Chania (Greece)

focuses its activities on economics and business management, food quality and natural product chemistry, the use of geoinformation for environmental management, horticultural genetics and biotechnology, as well as sustainable agriculture and the conservation of Mediterranean plant species.



The CIHEAM Montpellier (France)

focuses its activities on agricultural and territorial management, the resilience of Mediterranean agro-ecosystems, the integration of local agri-food sectors into value chains, governance for attractive rural and coastal areas, project engineering, as well as public policy.

The CIHEAM Zaragoza (Spain)

focuses its activities on sustainable agricultural and food systems, fisheries, aquaculture, forest management, water and soil management, as well as inclusive territorial development. Special attention is given to agricultural economics, risk management in agriculture, and rural policies.

The General Secretariat in Paris

- Develops external relations and institutional partnerships;
- Oversees publishing and communication activities;
- Manages the coordination of training, research and cooperation activities between the institutes;
- Promotes and coordinates initiatives related to priority and strategic themes.

AN ACTIVE NETWORK AT THE HEART OF THE MEDITERRANEAN



13

Member countries

4

Agricultural Institutes

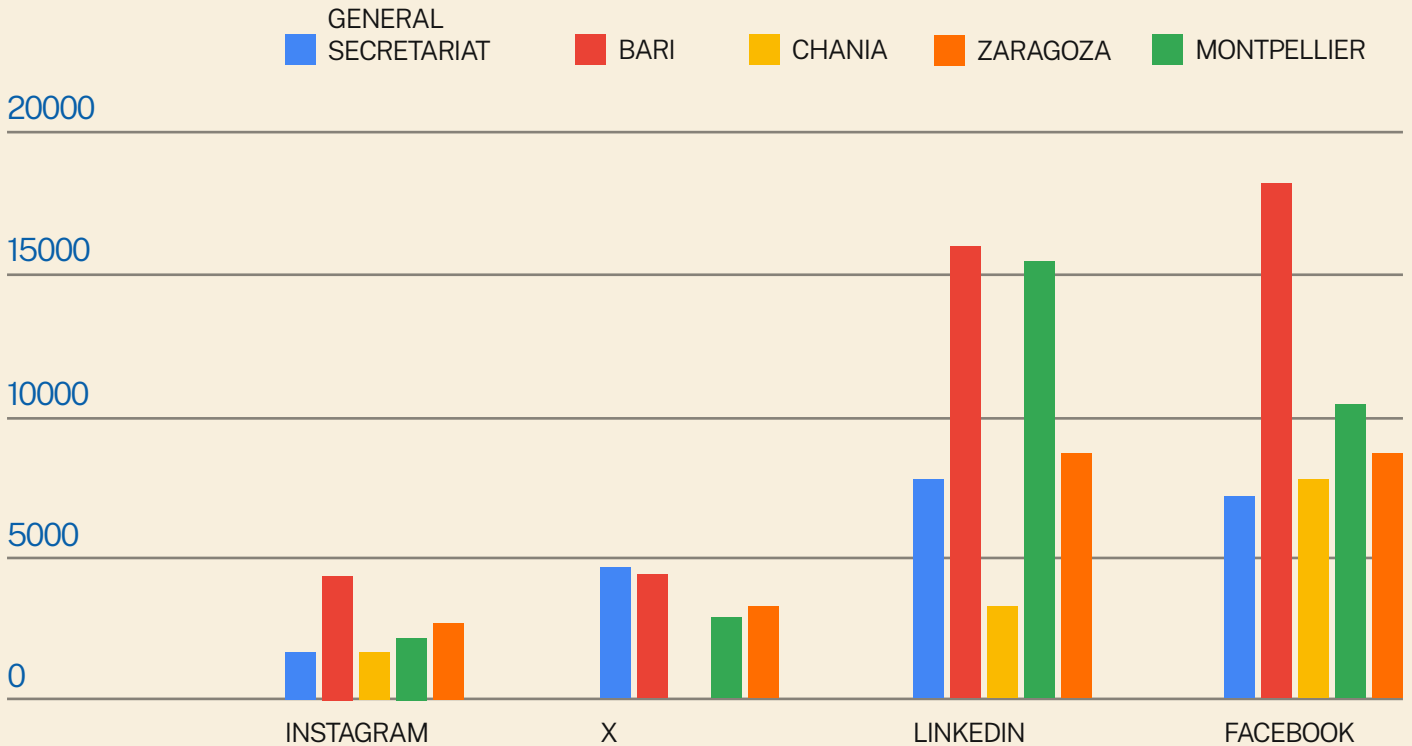
1

General Secretariat

+105

Ongoing projects in 22 countries

OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

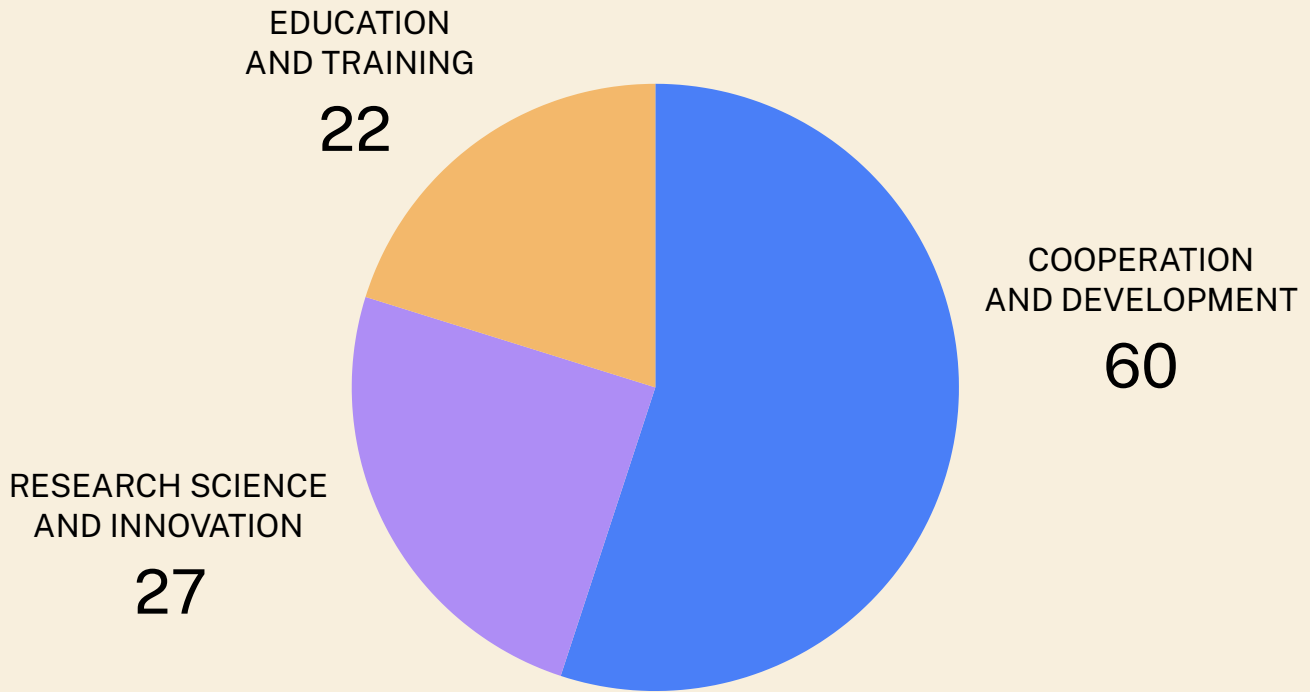


149.5K VIEWS SINCE ITS LAUNCH

Ciheam Press Review



OVERVIEW OF OUR PROJECTS FOR 2025



INCLUDING 3 CROSS-CUTTING INITIATIVES



Resilient and sustainable agriculture

Promoting collective strategies for Mediterranean rural areas



INSIST VAT

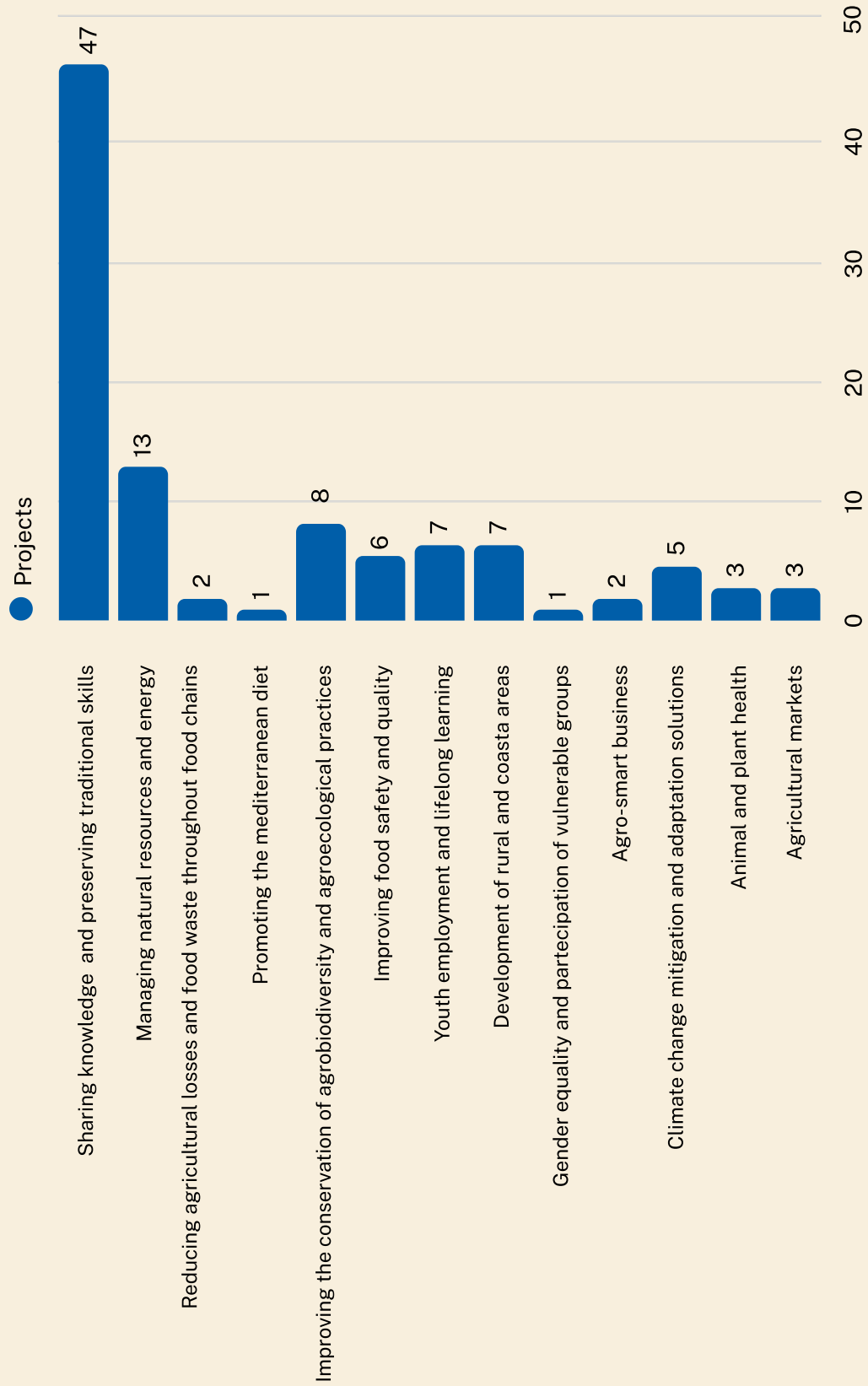
Institutional strengthening and innovation in agricultural and vocational training.



DATA4FOOD2030

Large-scale project linking training, cooperation and research for the future of food

DISTRIBUTION OF PROJECTS BY OBJECTIVES

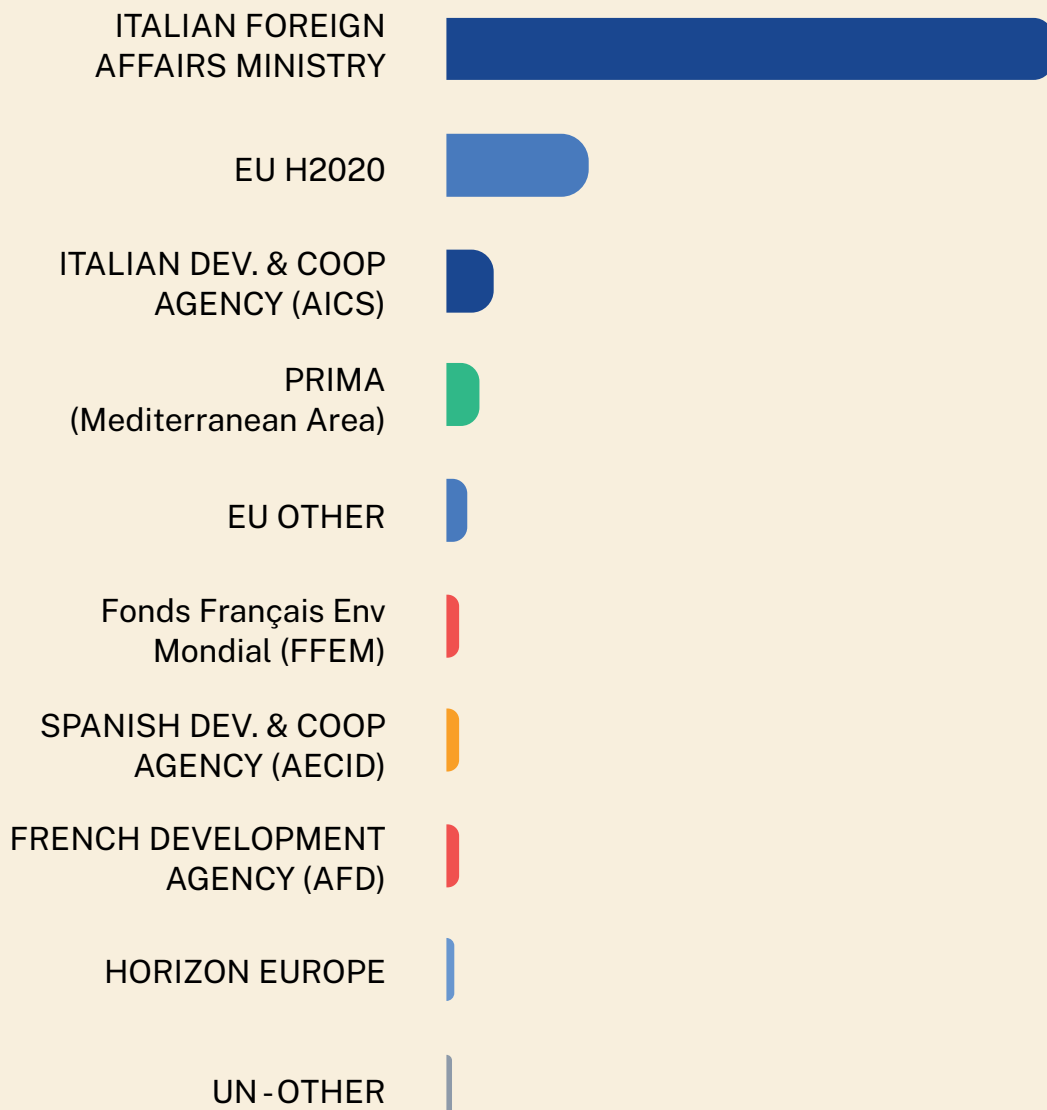


SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR OUR PROJECTS

TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET:

120.665.262 EUROS

TOP 10 DONORS



BREAKDOWN BY BLOCK



● ITALY ● EU ● PRIMA ● FRANCE ● SPAIN
● INTERNATIONAL ● GREECE ● MALTA

● ITALY	68.4%	● EU	22.2%
● PRIMA	4.0%	● FRANCE	2.6%
● SPAIN	1.4%	● INTERNATIONAL	0.7%
● GREECE	0.6%	● MALTA	0.2%

Raúl Compés

Director of the
CIHEAM Zaragoza



Education & Training

The CIHEAM is a unique multicultural learning and training hub in the Mediterranean due to its institutional nature, geographical footprint, and cooperative mission. Created to strengthen human capital in Mediterranean agriculture and food systems, the four Institutes of the CIHEAM deliver a highly specialised and complementary educational portfolio covering virtually the entire spectrum of agri-food systems.

Our pedagogical approaches are firmly grounded in **global and regional policy frameworks** while remaining closely aligned with the concrete needs of Mediterranean countries. At the global level, the CIHEAM draws inspiration from reference paradigms promoted by institutions such as FAO, notably the food systems approach structured around better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life.

These principles are fully reflected in **CIHEAM's Plan 2030**, which integrate sustainability, resilience, inclusiveness, and innovation as core pillars, with strategic priorities on gender equality, women's empowerment and youth empowerment. Within this framework, the CIHEAM programmes increasingly address cross-cutting and emerging issues using interdisciplinary and problem-oriented learning approaches.

The CIHEAM fosters a **Mediterranean learning community** by bringing together lecturers, researchers, policymakers and professionals from universities, research centres, public administrations, private companies and professional organisations. The CIHEAM's ongoing development of joint programmes and strategic partnerships with leading international institutions-such as the United Nations University (UNU-FLORES)-reinforces its role as a hub connecting education, research and policy at Mediterranean and global levels.

Its educational model is structured around two complementary pillars: high-level academic training through Master's programmes with a strong research component, and continuous professional development through advanced and specialised courses.

Modular curricula, hybrid learning formats, strong links between theory and practice, rigorous quality assurance mechanisms and close involvement of member countries ensure that the programmes of the CIHEAM remain impactful, demand-driven and future-oriented. Looking ahead, further integration of digital tools, interdisciplinary approaches and international joint degrees will continue to strengthen the role of the CIHEAM as a reference institution for Mediterranean agricultural and food education.

EDUCATION & TRAINING



Living and Learning at the CIHEAM Institutes

**A wide range of training courses to keep pace
with developments in the sector**

One of the CIHEAM's priorities is to support and train young people as key players in the sustainable transformation of agri-food systems. Through its training programmes and regional initiatives, the CIHEAM is committed to strengthening the links between Mediterranean youth, developing their leadership and governance skills, and fostering an engaged generation capable of addressing regional and global challenges through cooperation, innovation, and dialogue.

Among its range of educational programmes, the CIHEAM provides 27 different Master's and Master of Science programs, along with 147 specialized training courses and 9 advanced courses.

To enhance its educational programmes and strengthen the CIHEAM's postgraduate training strategy, a working group on education met at the

CIHEAM Chania in early February. This initiative aims to consolidate the excellence of the CIHEAM Institutes and reinforce its role as a benchmark for training and capacity building in the agri-food sector.

The Student Community:

While CIHEAM is defined by its diverse academic programs and professional expertise, its true distinction lies in the vitality of its student community and alumni network. By welcoming voices from across the Mediterranean and beyond, our Institutes act as cross-cultural spaces where the exchange of knowledge fosters a profound dialogue between cultures.

Relevant among the Institute's student-led initiatives is the CIHEAM Chania Student Council, an elected five-member body. In addition to organizing cultural

evenings and sports tournaments, the Council serves as a vital advocate for the student body, successfully negotiating enhancements to campus services and student life. Each Institute is committed to student well-being, implementing measures and activities to create pleasant living spaces and to foster long-lasting connections among students. In this context, the CIHEAM Secretariat, in partnership with the Lebanese Ministry of

Agriculture, organized its first International Seminar for Lebanese Alumni on 24 September in Beirut. Surrounded by high-level dignitaries such as H.E. Nizar Hani, Minister of Agriculture, and H.E. Kamal Shehadi, Minister of Technological Innovation and Artificial Intelligence, Lebanese alumni gathered to discuss the challenges facing the agri-food systems in Lebanon and the efforts required to rebuild the sector.



To learn more about our educational opportunities:



REWARDING EXCELLENCE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE



The award for the best thesis 2025 is presented to **Oussama Khaled!**

The Best Thesis Award

Since 1994, the CIHEAM has annually awarded the **best thesis** completed by a student from one of its Institutes as part of their Master of Science programme. This initiative aims to recognize their work and support them in the development of their scientific careers. **The €5,000** prize is awarded by the Governing Board, based on the recommendation of its Scientific Advisory Committee.

The thesis of Oussama Khaled, a student at the CIHEAM Bari, entitled “**Enhancing Evapotranspiration Estimation through Hyperspectral Remote Sensing and Machine Learning Techniques**”, examines how satellite imagery and artificial intelligence can be used to better estimate the amount of water actually used by crops in arid agricultural regions, with a focus on peanut cultivation in Egypt. His

work demonstrates that this approach can provide highly accurate forecasts, identify the key factors driving evapotranspiration, and support improved irrigation management. This research provides precise and operational tools for optimizing water resources in climate-vulnerable areas and highlights the potential of hyperspectral data coupled with AI for sustainable agriculture.



Nesrine Guesmi received the ‘Young Talent’ award at NutriForum!

The ‘Young Talent’ Award at NutriForum

This year, Nesrine Guesmi, a student at the CIHEAM Zaragoza, received the ‘Young Talent’ award at NutriForum for her scientific poster: “**Effect of the Combination of Different Feed Additives on Methane Production.**”

This professional forum, held on 9–10 April 2025 in Lleida, focused on the integration of new technologies in animal nutrition and feeding. This year’s sessions explored how artificial intelligence, software, robotics, and other innovations can improve animal nutrition systems. As part of this edition, nutriForum and nutriNews launched the “Young Talents in Animal Nutrition” award, an initiative designed to support young professionals in advancing their careers in the sector.

VOICES OF STUDENTS AND FACULTY

EXPERIENCES, LEARNING AND PERSPECTIVES



Oumaima Srih, CIHEAM Bari

At the Master Diploma Awarding Ceremony of the **SARe – Sustainable Agroecosystems and Resilience** programme, the CIHEAM Bari highlighted the outstanding work of Oumaima Srih, who received a Special Mention for her thesis on women's empowerment in rural Tunisia, entitled **“Assessing the Social and Economic Impact of Agricultural Cooperatives on Rural Women in the Jendouba Region, Tunisia.”**

Her research not only provides valuable academic contributions but also reflects the core values that guide the CIHEAM Bari's mission, particularly its strong and long-standing commitment to gender equality.

“Receiving this special mention was an incredible emotion. For me, it represents not only a personal achievement but also a recognition of the importance of the topic I chose to explore. Women in rural areas play a fundamental yet often invisible role. I wanted to give them a voice, to highlight their capacities and their essential contribution to the resilience of rural communities. Knowing that my research aligns with the CIHEAM Bari's commitment to gender equality makes me very proud.”

The Gender Equality Policy, the Gender Equality Plan, and the gender certification process demonstrate a concrete, long-term commitment by the Italian Institute of the CIHEAM. There is no resilience without inclusion. Empowering rural women means building stronger communities, capable of facing challenges and change. I hope my work will raise awareness, stimulate new research and inspire policies that truly value the role of women. I am deeply grateful to the CIHEAM Bari for this recognition and for supporting a learning journey that integrates scientific knowledge, human values and an inclusive vision.”



Wael Gheith, CIHEAM Zaragoza

Wael Gheith is an Egyptian student from Alexandria. He completed the International **Master's programme in Sustainable Fisheries Management**, jointly organised by the CIHEAM Zaragoza and the University of Alicante, between 2021 and 2023. He is currently pursuing a PhD at the University of the Basque Country, where he is developing economic models for the management of pelagic fisheries in the Bay of Biscay. In parallel, at the AZTI Scientific and Technological Centre, he analyses first-sale prices of anchovy, mackerel and albacore tuna.

In September 2024, Wael returned to the CIHEAM Zaragoza to further his training by attending the advanced course **“Technical Measures and Innovative Strategies to Mitigate the Impacts of Fisheries.”**

“I chose this programme because I wanted to deepen my knowledge of fisheries management and also contribute to the economic resilience and sustainability of marine resources at a global level. I consider this Master's programme at the CIHEAM Zaragoza to be a very valuable opportunity for students, especially those coming from Egypt, as it provides tools that allowed me to go further in data analysis.”

In addition, the academic references and courses helped me greatly to understand how fisheries operate, to identify their challenges, analyse them in depth, and reflect on how to introduce sustainable solutions to address them. The professors and researchers are highly qualified, and their support was essential to my development in the field of fisheries management”

FULL INTERVIEW

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cDXRjx6Klc>





Chifaa El Masri El Chaarani , CIHEAM Chania

Chifaa El Masri El Chaarani is a student at the Chania Institute of Higher Education, of Lebanese origin. She is currently in her second year in the **Department of Horticultural Genetics and Biotechnology**, where she is transitioning toward research and the preparation of a thesis.

“The Horticultural Biotechnology and Genetics Department at the CIHEAM Chania provided me with an exceptionally thorough and high-level academic experience. The 1st year’s well-designed intensive coursework, taught by high tier Professors/Researchers from around the world, endowed me with a solid foundation, covering everything from basic genetics to advanced molecular biology.

*Our professional head of department and lab assistants are key to our success, **providing hands-on instruction and close supervision for complex protocols**, such as RT-qPCR and plant genetic transformation.*

*More importantly, **the lab resources, tools, and machines** enable practical training and mastery of major genetic and molecular processes which can be utilized to answer high-level scientific questions. This research environment allows us to work with **state-of-the-art technology**, enabling us to **contribute to globally relevant agricultural genetics**, particularly in areas like fruit firmness and ethylene regulation.*

This department enhanced my passion, and I believe it is preparing me and my colleagues perfectly for decent careers in plant science and molecular breeding.”



EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF EXPERTS TO MEET MEDITERRANEAN AGRO-ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES



Tristan Berchoux, CIHEAM Montpellier
Lecturer-researcher and Director of Studies

Tristan Berchoux, a faculty member and Director of Studies since 2025, shares his vision of teaching rooted in Mediterranean challenges, combining scientific excellence, an interdisciplinary approach, and a strong operational focus. His career exemplifies the central role of the CIHEAM in training professionals and researchers capable of supporting agricultural, food, and environmental transitions in the region.

“I teach a wide range of courses addressing major environmental and agricultural challenges in the Mediterranean, including GIS, remote sensing, territorial diagnosis, Mediterranean agricultural systems, climate change adaptation, rural policy, and natural resource governance. All my teaching is at the Master 2 level, and I co-coordinate the CGAT pathway (Climate Change, Agricultural Management and Territories). I also supervise four PhD students [...] Alongside this, I coordinate or contribute to several research projects such as GRANULAR, GRACE, RestPoll and NATAE. [...]”

In 2025, I took on the role of Director of Studies. My responsibilities include coordinating curriculum development, ensuring coherence with our scientific strategy, and overseeing the Teaching and Student Affairs Department. I also manage our Erasmus programme and liaise with the French Ministry of Agriculture. [...]”

*Working at the CIHEAM Montpellier offers key advantages: a **strong Mediterranean focus, an international and interdisciplinary environment, and organisational agility that supports innovation.** Our programmes are unique for their Mediterranean lens and attract **highly qualified students** from across the region. Their diversity enriches learning and contributes to excellent employability. Our **hands-on, practice-oriented pedagogy** helps students quickly gain confidence and expertise, supported when needed by preparatory digital training.”*

Georges Baourakis

Director of the CIHEAM
Chania



Research, Science & Innovation

In order for the Mediterranean countries to face the increasing number and intensity of challenges, further effort in Research and Innovation is necessary. The impacts of climate change, population increase and political instability threaten food security and cause socioeconomic disruptions to the Mediterranean societies. We need to come up with new innovative methods for agricultural production and fisheries, methods that are sustainable in the long run. The CIHEAM, with its four institutes has a long track record of conducting research in this sector, the results of which are disseminated to the public and relevant stakeholders or assist policy makers in drawing out strategies. **With their inherently variable scientific expertise and geographical coverage, collaboration between the four institutes results in important synergies.**

Innovation originates from experimentation and testing of new ideas, but also from the adoption and adaptation of best practices that are employed elsewhere, or have been employed in the past. This is achieved by designing and implementing projects with specific goals and outcomes. The results of these projects are then communicated to the producers and all the stakeholders of

the agricultural value chain, as well as the policy makers that are required to assist those stakeholders in the adoption of the new methods. The international nature of the CIHEAM and its close collaboration with other international organisations, such as the FAO and the Union for the Mediterranean, provides access to the policy makers at the highest level, making the adoption of evidence-based policy more likely.

Despite the political, societal and environmental differences between the Mediterranean countries, their location around the Mediterranean Sea results in many commonalities, which means that they also face the same problems in many ways. In the future it is essential to strive for **stronger governance and institutional frameworks** and the implementation of policies that promote the adoption of innovative methods and practices. On the other hand, **raising awareness and capacity building** are imperative for the stakeholders to embrace those methods and practices. Through this international collaboration between research, policies and the people, we can hope for a sustainable future in the Mediterranean.

RESEARCH, SCIENCE & INNOVATION



Overview of our projects

In 2025, the CIHEAM was involved in **27 projects**, bringing together regional and international stakeholders to develop innovative solutions to agroecological, fisheries, water, and climate challenges. Here are a few examples.

BELIS

Fundings : Horizon Europe
Website: www.belisproject.eu



Breeding European Legumes for Increased Sustainability

Breeding European Legumes for Increased Sustainability (BELIS) is a project in which the CIHEAM Zaragoza is involved. Its objective is to strengthen the **legume breeding sector within the European Union**, as well as breeding methodologies, governance structures, and the dissemination of genetic innovations to stakeholders. The project focuses on fourteen legume species (seven forage and seven grain legumes) used for animal feed, human nutrition, and ecosystem services.

DIONYSUS

Fundings : PRIMA
Website: www.dionysus-nexus.eu



Operational Adaptation of Systemic Solutions Based on the WEF E Nexus (Water, Energy, Food, and Ecosystems) in Mediterranean Regions.

DIONYSUS is a project that focused on the Nexus approach in the Mediterranean region, coordinated by the **CIHEAM Montpellier**. The aim of this project is to usher in a “new spring” for WEF E (Water–Energy–Food–Ecosystems) resources across the Mediterranean basin.

Drawing on four demonstration sites (Egypt, Greece, Morocco, and Italy) and three replication sites (Algeria, Tunisia, and Türkiye) producing key agricultural commodities, and taking into account major trends expected over the next 30 years in climate, natural resources, urbanisation, markets, and macroeconomic variables, the project aims to co-design, test, and scale up operational adaptation strategies and sustainable market solutions.

Egypt



Algeria



SCALE-IT

Fundings: UE, SERI
Website: www.scale-it-organic.eu

SCALE-it | NATURE-BASED INPUTS,
ORGANIC FUTURE

Upscaling Efficient Alternatives for Contentious Inputs in Organic Farming

The **SCALE-it** project aims to **reduce the dependence of organic agriculture on controversial inputs**—such as certain plant protection products, conventional fertilizers, antibiotics, and synthetic or GMO-derived vitamins—by developing and disseminating cost-effective and accessible alternatives.

The **CIHEAM Bari** will co-lead trials on plant health and nutrition, covering crops such as grapevine, citrus, olive, tomato, cucumber, and basil, and will promote innovative fertilizers based on compost and digestate

BIOVALUE

Fundings : Horizon 2020
Website: www.biovalue-project.eu



Strengthening Biodiversity in Agri-Food Value Chains

The **BioValue** project aims to **enhance the sustainability of European agri-food systems** by integrating underutilized and genetically diverse crops throughout the value chain, from farm to fork.

The **CIHEAM Chania** has played a key role by providing **operational recommendations** on the production and marketing of these foods, while ensuring that results are disseminated to professionals and the general public.

SELECTIVE REVIEW OF RECENT ACADEMIC AND SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

New Medit. Mediterranean Journal of Economics, Agriculture, Environment and Food



[Download last issue](#)



www.newmedit.ciheam.org



Assessing Farmers’ Adoption Process on the Transition to Agroecology in Algeria by Using Social Ecological System Framework



HAL: [Seyhan Sevdic Cagiran, Amélie Bourceret, Sophie Drogué.](#)

[Download the publication](#)



<https://www.natae-agroecology.eu/fr/>



Since January 2025, the management and ownership of the scientific journal NEW MEDIT, dedicated to economic, agricultural, food, and environmental issues in the Mediterranean, have been transferred to the CIHEAM General Secretariat in Paris.

Indexed in Scopus and Web of Science (WOS), the journal serves as a key platform for studying economic and political dynamics in the Mediterranean. It addresses major agricultural and agri-food development challenges, including the management of natural and energy resources, the promotion of the Mediterranean diet and access to food, the development of rural and coastal areas, as well as adaptation to climate change.

The main challenge facing the agricultural landscapes of the Mediterranean and North African regions is not only climate change, but also the degradation of ecosystem services and the loss of biodiversity. The objective of this study is to examine the adoption of agroecology as a solution to these issues by farmers, through a case study conducted in Algeria. First, the authors determine the farmers’ position within the agricultural system and their relationships with other

components of the system, using Ostrom's Social-Ecological System Framework (SESF, 2009). At this stage, they also identify the factors that influence farmers' decision-making processes.

Subsequently, they enhance an existing bio-economic model with the results of this analysis in order to assess farmers' adoption of agroecological practices. Finally, using this bio-economic model, they develop policy scenarios aimed at accelerating the agroecological transition.

Oregon Wolfe Barley Genetic Stocks – Research and Teaching Tools for Next Generation Scientists

Journal Plant Registrations. Krause M.R. et al. 2025

The Oregon Wolfe Barley (OWB) mapping population (Reg. no. MP-4, NSL 554937 MAP) constitutes a valuable resource for genetics research and education. The OWBs are a set of doubled haploid barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.) lines developed at Oregon State University from the F¹ of a breed between Dr. Robert Wolfe's dominant and recessive marker stocks. Exhibiting a high level of genetic and phenotypic diversity, the OWBs are used worldwide as a research tool in barley genetics. To date, this work has resulted in 56 peer-reviewed publications, as well as three reports in the Barley Genetics Newsletter.

At the same time, the OWBs are widely used as an instructional resource at the Kindergarten through 12th grade, undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and professional levels.

They are currently employed in universities and/or research institutes in Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain, and the United States, and

 [Download the publication](#)

Sustainable and Healthy Diet Index (SHDI) Unveils Regional Differences in Europe and Northern Africa: Findings from the SysOrg study

Lea Ellen Matthiessen et al.
Sustainable and healthy diet index (SHDI) unveils regional differences in Europe and Northern Africa: findings from the SysOrg study. *European Journal of Nutrition* (2025) 64:275.

 [Download the publication](#)



are being further developed for educational purposes in additional countries.

The SysOrg study introduced a Sustainable and Healthy Diet Index (SHDI), based on the Planetary Health Diet, to evaluate diet quality across five European and North African regions: Cilento (Italy), Copenhagen (Denmark), Northern Hesse (Germany), Kenitra (Morocco), and Warsaw (Poland). Results showed that Copenhagen and Warsaw had the highest scores, indicating better adherence to health and sustainability guidelines.

Socio-demographic analysis highlighted significant variations: in Northern Hesse, men had better diet quality than women, whereas in Poland, higher income and education levels among women correlated with healthier patterns. Unexpected regional trends included high legume consumption in Copenhagen and elevated meat intake in Kenitra, while vegetable consumption remained low in Cilento despite its Mediterranean tradition.

Pre-Inoculation of ago2 and DCL2/4-Deficient *Nicotiana Benthamiana* Plants with the Pepino Mosaic Virus EU Mild Isolate Confers Complete Protection Against Superinfection with the Aggressive Isolate. *Frontiers in Virology*

The phenomenon of cross-protection in plants is comparable to vaccination in animals: when a plant is infected with a mild or “soft” version of a virus, it can become resistant to subsequent infection by a more aggressive version of the same virus. This concept was first described nearly 100 years ago.

In this study, researchers tested cross-protection in the plant *Nicotiana benthamiana*. They used a mild strain of PepMV (Sp13) to “vaccinate” the plants, then attempted to infect them with a more aggressive strain (PCH). They studied different types of plants: wild-type, and genetically modified plants lacking certain genes essential for RNA silencing, a natural antiviral defense mechanism.

The results showed that the protection worked very effectively: in all tested configurations, the aggressive virus was unable to develop in either new or previously infected leaves. When the researchers used a different virus (Potato virus X) as a second “challenge,” the protection was not complete, but viral accumulation was strongly reduced.

In summary, this study demonstrates that plants can activate a durable and effective mechanism of protection against viral superinfection, distinct from the classical RNA silencing pathway, which could be leveraged to better protect crops from viral diseases.



Theodore Spanos et al. Pre-inoculation of ago2 and DCL2/4-deficient Nicotiana benthamiana plants with the Pepino mosaic virus EU mild isolate confers complete protection against superinfection with the aggressive isolate. Front. Virol. (2025) 5:1584535

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Thierry Dupeuble

Director of the
CIHEAM Montpellier



Cooperation & Development

In an era where multilateralism is under siege and fragmented interests often eclipse the urgent needs of our planet, the CIHEAM stands firm. As we face the cascading crises of climate change, resource depletion, and systemic food insecurity, we remain anchored in our founding conviction: that lasting solutions can only be forged through meaningful cooperation between nations and their peoples. For us, collective action is not just a choice - it is the only path to a resilient future.

In 2025, the actions implemented by the CIHEAM powerfully illustrated this mission, making social inclusion a central pillar of climate adaptation and sustainable development. These projects served as a catalyst for robust collective dynamics, driving innovation and knowledge-sharing while significantly bolstering local capacities.

True to its values, the CIHEAM placed the empowerment of women and young people at the heart of its priorities, supporting their

access to training, agroecological practices, digital tools, and new economic opportunities. In a context of increasing pressure on Mediterranean food systems, the CIHEAM advocates a resolutely systemic approach. The future of Mediterranean solidarity depends on our ability to move beyond sectoral responses and to integrate environmental, social, and economic dimensions into coherent and sustainable strategies. This is the purpose of the projects led by the CIHEAM, which aim to strengthen territorial resilience while supporting agricultural and food systems transitions.

Through innovative tools and close partnerships with Member States, research institutions, local authorities, and civil society, the CIHEAM continues to pursue the vision that has guided its work since 1962. By fostering dialogue, cooperation, and coordinated action, it actively contributes to building a more resilient, more inclusive Mediterranean region, oriented toward a sustainable future.

COOPERATION & DEVELOPMENT



A SPOTLIGHT ON SOME OF THIS YEAR'S PARTNERS



Arab Water Council

While the Arab Water Council and the CIHEAM General Secretariat have cooperated closely for many years, their partnership was formalized during the 158th Governing Board meeting in mid-December with the **signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**. This agreement aims to consolidate ongoing initiatives and explore new avenues of cooperation, particularly by **strengthening the role of youth and women in the fields of innovation, sustainable management, and water governance**.

In this regard, the 6th Arab Water Forum, held in Abu Dhabi in 2024, marked a significant milestone with the adoption of the Youth and Women's Declaration on Water Security, Gender Equality, and a Sustainable Future in the Arab World.

The 7th Arab Water Forum, scheduled for 2026, will be a key milestone for launching new joint initiatives and translating these commitments into operational recommendations to be presented at the Euro-Mediterranean Water Forum in Rome in autumn 2026.

BF International (BFI)

BF International (BFI) is a key private partner of the CIHEAM Bari within the framework of **Italian strategic cooperation**, notably under the **Mattei Plan for Africa**. As the private component of the AREA initiative (Strengthening Agri-Food Ecosystems in Africa), BFI brings its cutting-edge **technological expertise** to complement the institutional and scientific role of the CIHEAM Bari.

This collaboration aims to implement large-scale sustainable agricultural projects in Senegal, Ghana, and the Republic of Congo, with the goal of building resilient and integrated value chains.

The partnership ensures effective **technology transfer**, the **development of local capacities**, and the creation of **economic opportunities**, while prioritizing food security and the modernization of African agri-food systems.



GBF Laboratory

Dr. Bouzayen, Director of the Fruit Genomics and Biotechnology Laboratory (GBF, Toulouse INP, France), has been a key partner of the **CIHEAM Chania** over the past year. Dr. Bouzayen is a leading expert in fruit genomics and biotechnology, with major contributions to understanding the regulation of tomato ripening, and he has coordinated significant European research networks on fleshy fruits.

The CIHEAM Chania's collaboration with Dr. Bouzayen and his laboratory has focused on advanced molecular physiology, functional genomics analyses of tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*), and genome-editing technologies. This partnership has significantly strengthened **the Institute's research capacity and international visibility in the field of horticultural genetics.**



The Union for the Mediterranean

The **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)** is one of the **CIHEAM Zaragoza's** most strategic partners, with both institutions sharing a commitment to addressing the major challenges facing Mediterranean agri-food systems through **innovation, sustainability, and social inclusion.**

This partnership has been particularly active in recent years, as demonstrated by the International Symposium on "Empowering Women through Innovation in Mediterranean Agri-Food Systems," held in June 2025.

Beyond this flagship event, the collaboration extends to numerous joint activities: from integrating green skills into agri-food training programmes to promote sustainable agricultural practices, to advancing gender equality in rural areas and in leadership positions within the sector.

This long-term alliance bolsters Mediterranean resilience against climate and socio-economic crises. By merging technical and diplomatic expertise, CIHEAM Zaragoza and the UfM are building a more inclusive governance framework that transforms regional challenges into concrete development opportunities through human capital and knowledge exchange.



Through its multi-stakeholder approach engaging French and Lebanese institutions, ministries, municipalities, and local NGOs and the strong complementarity between the CIHEAM Montpellier and Fair Trade Lebanon, ARADINA contributes to **strengthening Franco-Lebanese cooperation and laying the groundwork for an ambitious, sustainable, and collective agroecological transition.**

Fair Trade Lebanon

In 2024, the **CIHEAM Montpellier** and **Fair Trade Lebanon** launched a groundbreaking partnership as part of the **ARADINA project**, funded by the **French Development Agency (AFD)**.

Fair Trade Lebanon, active in agri-food and rural development, works to strengthen producers' livelihoods, promote fair trade, and facilitate market access. The CIHEAM Montpellier brings its expertise in sustainable agricultural systems, training, and research to develop agroecological practices adapted to Lebanese territories. Together, the two partners combine their agricultural expertise and market knowledge to drive sustainable transformation of value chains.

The ARADINA project also benefits from the involvement of **Action Against Hunger**, a key partner contributing its expertise in food security, nutrition, livelihoods, and community resilience. Through its extensive experience working with vulnerable populations in Lebanon, Action Against Hunger helps ensure that project activities are inclusive and responsive to local needs, particularly those of youth, women, and rural communities.

This partnership forms the foundation of the ARADINA project, which aims to develop sustainable, traceable, and inclusive agricultural value chains, generating opportunities for youth, women, and vulnerable rural populations.



SPOTLIGHT ON FIVE COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Let us Cultivate the Future with Traceable, Sustainable, Supportive and Inclusive Agriculture.

ARADINA

QUE SIGNIFIE L'AGROÉCOLOGIE ?

Cultiver en harmonie avec la nature

Une approche qui relie les individus, la nature et la manière dont les aliments sont produits

Elle se base sur les connaissances des agriculteurs et les découvertes scientifiques

Elle vise à rendre les sols plus fertiles, à équilibrer l'eau et à protéger la diversité biologique

Elle réduit l'utilisation de produits chimiques et l'importation de denrées

Favorise des systèmes alimentaires locaux, équitables et durables

Elle permet aux exploitations agricoles de mieux résister aux crises et de produire davantage

L'agroécologie est une méthode qui permet de cultiver des aliments tout en renouvelant le sol et en préservant les ressources naturelles.

France, AFD, CIHEAM MONTPELLIER, FAIR TRADE, العمل ضد الجوع ACTION AGAINST HUNGER

The ARADINA project supports the agroecological transition in Lebanon against a backdrop of climate, security and socioeconomic crises, by promoting agroecology and facilitating access to national and international markets.

The project aims to accompany 2,500 farmers (at least 30% of whom will be women) in their agroecological transition, increase the income of the farming households involved, and support 145 SMEs and cooperatives. It also aims to increase the share of agroecological products among consumers, reduce agricultural water consumption by 20%, and enhance the climate resilience of at least 5,000 people.



Fundings : Agence Française de Développement (AFD)
[Read more](#)

Promoting Legumes in Mediterranean Food Systems (BEANS)



The BEANS Meta Network (Boosting Euro-Mediterranean Agrifood through Networked Systems) aims to promote legumes in Mediterranean food systems by supporting research and innovation, advancing public policy, strengthening capacities, and disseminating knowledge.

Developed in partnership with international, regional, and national institutions, research centers, experts, and private stakeholders, BEANS builds on existing platforms, including SFS-MED and FEED, and fully aligns with the priorities of the CIHEAM Strategic Plan 2030 for sustainable food systems.

Its core ambition is to position Mediterranean legumes, such as faba beans, lentils, chickpeas, and dry beans, as a regional public good driving rural prosperity, sustainability, and resilience; strengthening nutrition and health security; stimulating economic growth; and preserving Mediterranean agricultural heritage.

Fundings: CIHEAM Bari, with the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI).

Website: <https://beans.ciheam.org/>



Supporting Agricultural Technical Assistance and Capacity Building in Malta



In February 2025, the Maltese Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights (MAFA) and the CIHEAM Zaragoza signed an agreement to strengthen sustainable agricultural development in Malta. This collaboration, which builds on a memorandum of understanding established in 2024, focuses on key areas such as organic farming, crop protection, livestock production, animal health and welfare, food safety, and socio-economic analysis.

[Read more](#)



Promoting a Plant Genetic Resources Community for Europe



PRO-GRACE aims to create a European research infrastructure for the conservation, valorization, and sharing of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. The project brings together European institutions to centralize data, define standards for ex situ and in situ management, and develop scientific services for researchers, breeders, and farmers.

The CIHEAM Chania plays a central role in capacity building, stakeholder engagement, and training activities by organizing international workshops and coordinating interactions with researchers, breeders, and policymakers.

Fundings: European Union
[Read more](#)



Strengthening the Strategic Partnership with Tunisia on Food Security



The TANIT programme, a pilot initiative under the **Mattei Plan for Africa**, aims to strengthen food security in Tunisia by promoting sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture. It focuses on **enhancing local water governance** and adopting **advanced technologies** in areas most affected by climate change.



The initiative is built upon two pillars: TANIT Water and Land Reclamation, devoted to urban wastewater reuse for irrigation, and TANIT Knowledge Transfer, which establishes a dedicated hub for research and technology exchange. Annually, the program aims to manage 56.3 million m³ of reused water and irrigate 13,000 hectares, creating 10,000 jobs and supporting circular migration. Supported by the Italian Climate Fund, Italy serves as a strategic partner, mobilizing public and private expertise to drive technology and capacity transfer between both nations.

Fundings: European Union
[Read more](#)



MEET OUR BENEFICIARIES

Lucía Velasco, GRASS Ceiling



“The GRASS Ceiling programme enabled me to learn English and gain confidence. I had the opportunity to visit Brussels, where I gave a speech in English – an experience that left a lasting impression on me. The trip was both enriching and formative. It also allowed me to raise awareness of rural life and represent Spain.”

Lucía Velasco is a beneficiary of the **GRASS CEILING** project at the **CIHEAM Zaragoza**, which aims to **empower rural women** and increase the number of socio-ecological innovations led by women in agriculture, the rural economy, and rural communities.

Lucía is a livestock farmer in Asturias, in northwestern Spain. She practices transhumance with her herd, meaning a seasonal movement between the low valleys and high pastures—a tradition that has been passed down in the region for over four centuries. Following her husband’s career change, Lucía took over the reins and has since been fully committed to the GRASS CEILING project.

FULL INTERVIEW



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GiwxiwHBQOk>



PROJECT GRASS CEILING



grassceiling.eu

Irfan Tarelli, EU GoAL



Irfan Tarelli, the **Director General for Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)** in **Albania**, is involved in the **EU GOAL** project, an initiative supported by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation – Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and implemented by the **CIHEAM Bari**. The project aims to support the MARD in its **EU accession process**, particularly by facilitating negotiations on Agriculture and Fisheries and ensuring compliance with the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

“The path to Albania’s accession to the EU implies an ambitious programme to successfully conclude negotiations over the coming years. This requires a profound transformation of the Albanian agricultural sector, going well beyond legislative alignment: it means establishing and strengthening management and control systems: a crucial opportunity is represented by cooperation. Among our partners, Italy provides determining support to accelerate progress in Chapter 11, particularly with the ‘EU GOAL’ project, fundamental in transforming alignment into learning opportunities for the Ministry’s staff. The development of our institutional capacities is a priority and a key factor for Albanian agriculture and rural communities to thrive within the European Union”.

PROJECT EU GOAL:



<https://www.iamb.ciheam.org/eu-goal/>

Mr Gaber, DIONYSUS



Mr Gaber is a farmer in the Luxor Governorate in Egypt. In the region, farmers rely on the Nile to irrigate their crops, which makes them particularly vulnerable to the river drying up and the effects of climate change, including soil salinisation, and the use of modern, water-efficient irrigation systems is very expensive.

“I was invited to join the project’s Action Panel, and it was truly eye-opening. Researchers and representatives from the Ministries of Water and Agriculture met with farmers for the first time. The objective was to view our challenges not as isolated issues, but as part of the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus. My main role was to ensure that the solutions were practical by bringing in real-life field perspectives.”

This project has enabled us to move from a sense of helplessness in the face of climate change and rising costs to becoming active managers of our resources. We are now farming in a smarter, more efficient, and more sustainable way.”



www.graceri.eu/pro-grace

Dr. Giovanni Giuliano PRO-GRACE



Dr. Giovanni Giuliano is a Research Director at the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development (ENEA) and the coordinator of the PRO-GRACE project. He is an expert in plant genomics and metabolic engineering, specializing in carotenoid biosynthesis and the nutritional improvement of crops such as tomato, potato, and saffron.

“PRO-GRACE has created an unprecedented opportunity to connect the European research community working on plant genetic resources. The collective vision emerging from PRO-GRACE is clear: to develop a robust and inclusive research infrastructure that unites genebanks, researchers, breeders, and communities under a shared mission of preserving and utilising plant diversity. Through coordinated capacity building, digital innovation, and open collaboration, the project is poised to secure Europe’s plant heritage and translate its genetic wealth into solutions for food security, climate resilience, and sustainable agriculture. The CIHEAM Chania’s contribution has been noticeable: the expertise in horticultural genetics and the capacity to bring together scientists is important in building the foundations of the future GRACE-RI research infrastructure. The progress achieved so far demonstrates the real added value of working together as a coordinated European network.”



<https://www.grace-ri.eu/pro-grace>

POLITICAL & INSTITUTIONAL DIALOGUE

..

Biagio Di Terlizzi

Director of the
CIHEAM Bari



Political & Institutional Dialogue

The commitment of the CIHEAM in the Mediterranean has focused on strengthening its role as a regional platform for dialogue among countries, institutions, and stakeholders. A key initiative has been the establishment of a higher (meta)network, which is fundamental for **connecting national and regional institutions, academia, and the private sector**. The objective is to enhance dialogue that strengthens local communities and activates an economic system capable of supporting farmers through programmes promoting local value chains. A particularly fruitful example was the activation of the meta-network on **Legumes (Beans meta network)**, which has boosted the existing network in this field.

The role the CIHEAM has developed throughout 2025 has already outlined a strategy to consolidate, at a regional level, a function that connects human resources operating at the local level: farmers, operators, officials, and decision makers. The most relevant strategic orientation stems from the **knowledge** that emerges at the community level, is **collected**, and then **presented at ministerial conferences on agriculture**. This process guides the policy debate in individual countries while ensuring regional harmonization.

The CIHEAM's scientific and institutional diplomacy draws its strength from the promotion of corporate actions driven by the General Secretariat, aimed at linking the various Institutes. These actions are articulated through essential working groups—such as the Education, Communication, Human Resources, IT, and the Accountants **working groups**—and crucial Thematic Groups. Among the latter, the **Gender Equality and Women Empowerment** group holds particular strategic importance. All these initiatives are based on knowledge promoted by the scientific community while simultaneously identifying policies that can be taken into consideration at the country and regional levels.

Looking ahead to 2026, the path to further consolidate our role as a “bridge for dialogue” is clear. **The next Ministerial Conference on Agriculture**, scheduled for November 2026 in Rome, will resume the conclusions of the Morocco Conference (2024), updating the orientations related to food systems. This event will be crucial for reinforcing regional cohesion and providing concrete follow-up to the policy recommendations that emerged from the grassroots.

OFFICIAL MEETINGS

▼ *The Secretary General T. Miano, the Greek Delegate C. Avouglas, and the Director of the CIHEAM Chania G. Baourakis, met with H.E. Mr. K. Tsiaras, Minister of Agriculture of Greece.*



22.01.2025-Digital Connectivity and the Mediterranean (Ministerial event, Italy)

Organized in collaboration with the D4D Hub, this event placed the CIHEAM Bari at the center of discussions on strategic investments and digital innovation to strengthen partnerships and promote inclusive economic development.

25.01.2025-Inauguration of the Nairobi Farmers' Market (CIHEAM Bari)

The successful launch of this market, part of the MAMi initiative funded by Italian cooperation, highlights the project's direct impact on stimulating local economies and ensuring community-level food sovereignty.

30.01.2025 - Meeting with the Greek Minister of Agriculture

A CIHEAM delegation, led by its Secretary General met with H.E. Mr. K. Tsiaras, Minister of Agriculture of Greece.

This meeting reinforced a long-standing collaboration and opened new prospects for a strengthened partnership focused on sustainable development and food sovereignty in the Mediterranean region.



▲
Biagio Di Terlizzi, Director of the CIHEAM Bari, at the inauguration of the Nairobi Farmers' Market



▶
Mr. Teodoro Miano, Secretary General of Ciheam and H.E. Alaa Farouk, Egypt's Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform

29-31.01.2025 -Kick-off Meeting of the INSIST-VAT Project

The CIHEAM Montpellier, as coordinator of the Erasmus+ INSIST-VAT project dedicated to strengthening capacities in agricultural vocational education and training (CB-VET), hosted the project's kick-off meeting from 29 to 31 January 2025 on its campus. Over three days, around twenty representatives from the eight partner institutions worked on structuring the action plan, defining the consortium's governance, and outlining the project's administrative and financial arrangements.

30-31.01.2025 -EXCEL4MED Annual Meeting

The annual EXCEL4MED project meeting was held in Montpellier, bringing together partners from Greece, Malta, and France to review project progress and strengthen cooperation within the consortium. Discussions helped identify upcoming priorities and consolidate the project's collaborative momentum.

17.02.2025 - Meeting with Egypt's Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform

Also present were Prof. Adel Abdel Azeem, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, President of the Agricultural Research Center, and Egypt's Delegate to the CIHEAM, and Dr. Saad Moussa, Supervisor of Foreign Agricultural Relations. Discussions focused on developing joint agricultural projects between the Ministry and the CIHEAM, with an emphasis on training researchers and students, fostering innovation, and promoting the adoption of more resilient agricultural practices in response to environmental challenges.



▼ Visit to ESA Mograne (Higher School of Agriculture), on the sidelines of the Meeting at the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources, and Maritime Fisheries of Tunisia

H.E Anton Refalo, Minister for Agriculture of Malta and Mr. Teodoro Miano, Secretary General of the CIHEAM ▲



18.02.2025 -Visit of H.E. Ibrahim Mayaki, African Union Special Envoy, to the CIHEAM Bari

The visit of the African Union Special Envoy for Food Systems enabled a high-level dialogue on the challenges and opportunities in the African agri-food sector, further strengthening the strategic role of the CIHEAM Bari.

03.03.2025 - Official Visit of a CIHEAM Delegation to the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources, and Maritime Fisheries of Tunisia

The visit provided an opportunity to meet with the Secretary of State, Mr. Hamadi HABAIEB (in charge of water resources), the Minister’s Chief of Staff, Mr. Haikel HECHLEF, and Mr. Chokri ZAIRI, Director of International Cooperation. Discussions focused on reviewing past and ongoing projects, as well as exploring prospects for future collaboration.

17.03.2025-Meeting with H.E. Anton Refalo, Minister of Agriculture of Malta, and Signing of a New Agreement

This new Memorandum of Understanding includes, among other provisions, the establishment of a CIHEAM office within Malta’s Agricultural Research and Innovation Hub, the organization of regular events, the implementation of joint projects, conferences and workshops, as well as exchanges of experts and officials.



Official Visit of H.E Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, African Union Special Envoy for Food Systems, to the CIHEAM Bari

Family picture. High Level Regional Workshop on Mediterranean Biodiversity



04.2025-Official Presentation of the ARADINA Project to the New Lebanese Ministers of Agriculture and Environment

The CIHEAM Montpellier, Fair Trade Lebanon, and Action Against Hunger, together with the French Development Agency, presented the ARADINA project to the new Ministers of Agriculture, H.E. Nizar HANI, and Environment, H.E. Tamara ELZEIN. This project is implemented in close collaboration with the ministries.

09.04.2025 -Ambassadors’ Luncheon, organized by the CIHEAM in partnership with the Permanent Delegation of Italy to International Organizations in Paris

This high-level luncheon brought together ambassadors from the CIHEAM member states as well as representatives from other Mediterranean countries, including the Balkans. The meeting aimed to raise awareness of the CIHEAM’s strategic role, particularly through the work of its Secretary General, who is actively engaged in political and institutional dialogue to support regional priorities and address pressing challenges.

02 - 05.06.2025 - High Level Regional Workshop on Mediterranean Biodiversity Hosted at the CIHEAM Montpellier

This major regional workshop focused on the implementation of Goal 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Co-organized by the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC), and the French Biodiversity Office (OFB), the event brought together 30 to 40 experts, institutional representatives, and conservation practitioners from across the Mediterranean basin.



▲ At the Grand Serail of Beirut. From left: Mr Biagio Di Terlizzi, Director of the CIHEAM Bari, Mr Thierry Dupeuble, Director of the CIHEAM Montpellier, H.E. Nizar Hani, Minister of Agriculture, H.E. Nawaf Salam, Prime Minister of Lebanon, Ms. Frida Krifca, President of the CIHEAM, Mr Teodoro Miano, Secretary General of the CIHEAM, Ms Wafaa El Dikah Hamzé, Vice-President and Delegate for Lebanon, Mr Maurizio Raeli, Delegate for Italy, and Mr Raúl Compès, Director of the CIHEAM Zaragoza.

23.09.2025 -Meeting with the Lebanese Prime Minister, H.E. Nawaf Salam, and the Minister of Agriculture, H.E. Nizar Hani

The directors of the CIHEAM Institutes were also present at this meeting, which focused on national priorities and avenues for cooperation with the Institutes, particularly in the areas of training, applied research, and support for value chains.

13.10.2025 -Final Meeting of the “One Water” Project in Cairo

Held during Water Week in Cairo, this session helped define a shared vision for water security in the Mediterranean, thereby strengthening collaboration between the MENA region and the Balkans.

23.10.2025 -Visit by representatives from universities in Kenya and Tanzania to the CIHEAM Zaragoza

As part of the FOSTER project, the CIHEAM Zaragoza welcomed a delegation from universities in Kenya and Tanzania on 23 October 2025 to present its activities and discuss best practices in training and research. This initiative is part of an international partnership between nine institutions, promoting collaboration, innovation and openness in higher education.



Family picture. Visit by Kenya and Tanzania University representatives to the CIHEAM Zaragoza

Final Meeting of the "One Water" Project in Cairo



EVENTS AND CONFERENCES



Field trip at the international seminar Future of Agro-silvopastoralism ▲

Future of Agro-Silvopastoralism – Bridging the Gap Between Tradition and Innovation in Mediterranean and Mountainous Pastures

The international seminar Agrosilvopastoral Futures, co-organized by FAO and the CIHEAM Pastures and Forage Crops Network, was held from 9 to 11 of April in Kuşadası, Türkiye. The event brought together over 100 participants from 17 countries to share scientific advances and innovations aimed at strengthening the sustainability of pastoral systems in Mediterranean and mountainous regions.

Lecture by Rosa Gallardo Cobos, Director of the International Chair on Artificial Intelligence and Agriculture

This lecture took place on 13 March 2025, at the University of Córdoba. R. Gallardo Cobos highlighted the challenges of digital transformation in Mediterranean agriculture, emphasizing the key role of artificial intelligence in enhancing sustainability, productivity, and the sector's attractiveness.

Agri-food Policy and the Common Agricultural Policy (PAC): Biodiverse Agri-food Systems for a New Era

This 2025 hybrid workshop at CIHEAM Chania focused on several key areas. Held from June 16 to 20, the workshop was part of the Master's in Business Economics and Management and coordinated by Prof. Konstadinos Mattas. It explored challenges in agri-food systems, specifically addressing sustainability, food security, and public policy design. Experts, researchers, and students collaborated to develop innovative, interdisciplinary solutions. The event aimed to prepare future leaders to enhance biodiversity and resilience within agri-food systems.

[Read more](#)



Catherine Bréchnignac, President of the Interacademia Group for Development (GID), and Thierry Dupeuble, Director of the CIHEAM Montpellier at the Parménides XI Conference ▲

[Access the session](#)

[Parménides XI Conference-Feeding the Mediterranean](#)

Organized from 17 to 19 June 2025 at the **CIHEAM Montpellier**, the 11th Parménides Colloquium brought together numerous international experts under the theme “Feeding the Mediterranean.” Co-organized by the CIHEAM and the **Interacademia Group for Development (GID)**, with the support of the **French Academy of Sciences**, the **French Academy of Agriculture**, the

SFS-MED Platform, and **Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole**, the event provided a forum for reflection on major agricultural and food system transitions in the region.

The discussions, opened with a video message from **H.E. Annie Genevard, French Minister of Agriculture**, and enriched by contributions from **Mr. Mohammed Sadiki (Morocco)** and **Ms. Akissa Bahri (Tunisia)**, addressed food

sovereignty, agroecological transition, sustainable water management, and the valorization of the Mediterranean diet.

As a flagship event bridging science and policy, this edition highlighted the need to place food at the center of public policy and to promote an integrated approach to agriculture based on sustainability, diversity, and Mediterranean cooperation.



- Lauréat du :**
- **Prix de la Créativité à Salerne (2017)**
 - **Prix du Lion Ailé à la Biennale de Venise (2017)**
 - **Prix de la Critique à Cava de' Tirreni (2018)**

Discover the behind-the-scenes story of this scientific and artistic adventure.

Mustapha Taaba, painter for the Artistic Residency at the CIHEAM Montpellier ▲

A Unique Artistic Residency at the CIHEAM Montpellier

On the sidelines of the 11th Parménides Conference, the CIHEAM Montpellier launched its first artistic residency, hosting the Algerian painter **Mustapha Taaba** for a project combining artistic creation, collective reflection, and educational activities around the theme **“Food Today and Tomorrow in the Mediterranean.”**

This initiative fully aligns with the Institute’s mission: fostering intercultural dialogue, supporting Mediterranean transitions, and

promoting issues related to food, sustainability, and social change.

Over two months, Mustapha Taaba worked closely with students from **Frédéric Bazille High School** as well as with the **CIHEAM Montpellier’s** doctoral and postdoctoral researchers.

Together, they explored food practices, culinary heritage, and societal changes shaping Mediterranean food systems.





▲ High-level representatives at the conference on Governance of the Water-Environment-Food-Energy Nexus in the Mediterranean and Middle East, with the participation of Thierry Dupeuble, Director of the CIHEAM Montpellier and Adel Abdel Azzim Abu Al-Yazid, CIHEAM representative from Egypt.



Conference on Governance of the Water-Environment-Food-Energy Nexus in the Mediterranean and Middle East

Hold from June 20 to July 22 and organized by the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), the Egyptian Agricultural Research Center (ARC), and the CIHEAM Montpellier in Cairo, this conference resulted in the drafting of a roadmap for the CIHEAM Montpellier, aimed in particular at guiding the work of the DIONYSUS project.

The 17th International Congress of the Mediterranean Phytopathological Union (MPU)

The 17th International MPU Congress was held from 7 to 10 July 2025 at the CIHEAM Bari, bringing together the international scientific community under the theme: “**New Frontiers in Research and Education in Plant Pathology for Plant Health and Food Security.**”

This prestigious event, organized jointly by the Centro Congressi del Levante

and the Cosimo Lacirignola Campus of the CIHEAM Bari, gathered over 350 experts from 37 countries. The congress emphasized international scientific cooperation and dialogue among researchers, institutions, industry, and civil society. It aimed to strengthen a dynamic, collaborative, and forward-looking Mediterranean scientific community capable of addressing the growing challenges of plant health and the sustainability of food systems.



Mr Amine Zouaghi, researcher 18th EAAE Pre-Congress Workshop –University of Bonn ▲

18th EAAE Pre-Congress Workshop – University of Bonn

The EAAE 2025 pre-congress workshop, held from 26 to 29 August, was organized by the CIHEAM Chania within the framework of the BioValue and RADIANT/Horizon 2020 projects. Titled “Promoting the Diversification of Agri-Food Value Chains through Underutilized Crops and Addressing Associated Socio-Economic and Policy Challenges”, the workshop featured a presentation by Mr. Amine Zouaghi (researcher and PhD candidate) entitled “Strengthening Sustainable Food Systems through Innovative

Food Products Based on Underutilized Crops: A 6M Approach from Recipe Development to Market Integration.”

The event provided an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas, share knowledge, and explore new approaches for building resilient and sustainable food systems.

Promoting agrobiodiversity: a dialogue between public policy, agri-food innovation and culinary creativity

Organized by the CIHEAM Chania on 15 September 2025 within the framework of the European BIOValue project (Horizon 2020), this event, titled “Cooking Policies for Sustainable and Rich Agri-Food and Agrobiodiversity”, brought together over 60 policymakers, producers, agri-food sector representatives, and chefs. The meeting highlighted underutilized plant species and varieties while promoting the development of innovative products and original culinary creations.



Family picture. Training on sustainable food systems for Mediterranean civil society ▲

[Training on sustainable food systems for Mediterranean civil society](#)

From 23 to 25 September 2025, the CIHEAM Zaragoza hosted a three-day training on sustainable food systems as part of the Mubadarat programme, in partnership with IUCN Med, AECID, and FIAP. The event brought together 33 participants from six Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia), as well as institutional partners.

The training aimed to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to design and implement sustainable agricultural projects, drawing on nature-based solutions, agroecology, and the reinforcement of local value chains. Participants combined theoretical learning with field visits, exploring sustainable agricultural practices, integrated water management, and agroecological transitions. The final day focused on translating this knowledge

into concrete projects, incorporating social inclusion, the participation of women and youth, and monitoring tools.

This event contributes to **building a Mediterranean civil society network** capable of supporting the sustainable transformation of food systems, enhancing ecological resilience, and improving the well-being of local communities.



[First International Seminar of the CIHEAM Lebanese Alumni – Investing in Youth for Sustainable Agri-Food Systems](#)

On 24 September 2025, the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture and the CIHEAM co-organized in Beirut the first international seminar of the CIHEAM's Lebanese Alumni, aiming to place youth, skills, and innovation at the heart of the country's agri-food transformation. The event brought together around

one hundred alumni alongside representatives from ministries, diplomatic missions, universities, and the private sector.

Speeches by H.E. Nizar Hani, Minister of Agriculture, and H.E. Kamal Shehadi, Minister of Technological Innovation and Artificial Intelligence, highlighted the need to connect education, applied research, and employment to strengthen the sustainability and resilience of the sector.

Four roundtables structured the discussions, focusing on education and employment, innovation and digitalization, research for sustainable agriculture, and the development of the Alumni network.

The seminar laid the groundwork for the creation of a CIHEAM Lebanese Alumni Network, designed to enhance partnerships, joint research, and intergenerational mentoring, in line with the CIHEAM's 2030 Strategic Plan.



Experts and students from the CIHEAM Zaragoza during the World Food Day celebration ▲



Conferencia inaugural del curso 2025-2026 del CIHEAM Zaragoza – Campus de Aula Dei

Geopolítica agroalimentaria en el Mediterráneo:

Amenazas y oportunidades de colaboración

Zaragoza, 28 de octubre de 2025

• Fernando Miranda Sotillos

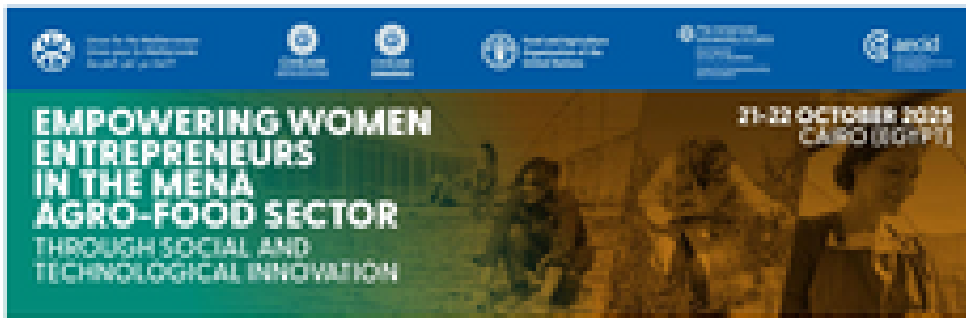
[Listen to the lecture](#)

Lecture by Fernando Miranda Sotillos, Advisor for Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food at the Spanish Diplomatic Mission in Italy and Deputy Permanent Representative of Spain to the FAO

On 23 October 2025, Fernando Miranda Sotillos delivered a lecture at the CIHEAM Zaragoza on agri-food geopolitics in the Mediterranean, analyzing the impact of international conflicts and trade tensions on agriculture and food trade in the region.

[World Food Day Celebration in Zaragoza](#)

The CIHEAM Zaragoza celebrated World Food Day on 16 October 2025 by hosting over 40 local economic stakeholders around the theme “The Language of Food in the Mediterranean.” The event highlighted the challenges and innovations of Mediterranean food systems through testimonies from international students and expert presentations on key topics such as legumes, aquaculture, olive oil production, and sustainable livestock farming.



**Joint Draft Declaration:
CIHEAM-UfM Commitment to a Regional Agenda on
Innovation for Women Entrepreneurs in the Agro-Food Value
Chain in the Euro-Mediterranean Region**

1. Rationale and Vision

The Euro-Mediterranean region faces converging challenges: climate change, resource scarcity, food insecurity, and persistent gender inequalities. Women, particularly in rural areas, play a central role in food systems, yet their contributions often remain undervalued and underrepresented in innovation ecosystems.

Building on the outcomes of the Zaragoza Symposium (June 2025), the CIHEAM and the UfM recognize that empowering women as innovators and entrepreneurs is essential for achieving inclusive growth, sustainable food systems, and regional stability.

Gender equality is not only a moral and social imperative — it is a driver of economic resilience, environmental stewardship, and innovation.

2. Strategic Objective

The overarching goal of this initiative is to promote women's leadership and participation in agri-food innovation and entrepreneurship by creating enabling environments, strengthening capacities, and improving access to finance, knowledge, and markets.

This will be achieved through a Regional Task Force and a Joint Plan of Action (2026–2030), aligning national and regional initiatives with international frameworks such as the SDGs, GFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality, and the EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III).

3. Why a Regional Task Force?

Fragmentation of efforts remains one of the main obstacles to achieving gender equality in the agri-food sector. The proposed UfM-CIHEAM Regional Task Force on Women,

[DOWNLOAD THE
DRAFT DECLARATION](#)

[Support for Women Entrepreneurs in the MENA Region](#)

On 21 and 22 October 2025, the Regional Stakeholder Dialogue and Training on Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in the Agri-Food Sector in the MENA Region through Social and Technological Innovation was held. This event, organized by the **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)** with financial support from **AECID**, in collaboration with the CIHEAM, the FAO Regional

Office for the Near East and North Africa, the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (CEI) at the American University in Cairo (AUC), and the SFS-Med platform, highlighted regional efforts to promote women's leadership and innovation in agri-food systems. During the event, a draft joint declaration entitled “CIHEAM and UfM Commitment to a Regional Innovation programme for Women Entrepreneurs in the Agri-Food Value Chain in the Euro-Mediterranean Region” was presented.

This initiative builds on commitments made during the International Symposium held at the CIHEAM Zaragoza in June 2025 on women's empowerment and innovation in Mediterranean agri-food systems, in partnership with UfM, AECID, and FAO.

[“Inter-shore exchanges” at the CIHEAM Montpellier as part of the AACC-MED project](#)

As part of the three-year **AACC-Med project: Adapting Mediterranean Agriculture to Climate Change** (2024–2026), the CIHEAM Montpellier, together with the FARM Foundation, the “4 per 1000” Initiative, regional branches of Crédit Agricole, Crédit Agricole Morocco, Crédit Agricole Italy, and Initiative AAA, organized on 6 November 2025 a new edition of the “Cross-

Mediterranean Exchanges” dedicated to the adaptation of Mediterranean agriculture to climate change. Open to the public, the conference brought together a wide range of stakeholders: farmers, public policymakers, elected officials, researchers, financial institutions, local actors, and engaged citizens from both shores of the Mediterranean. The event provided an opportunity to **share field experiences and concrete solutions, while strengthening the co-construction of a sustainable agricultural strategy for**

the region. It also helped consolidate a space for regional cooperation, supporting collective efforts to adapt Mediterranean agricultural systems.

Prior to the public conference, the CIHEAM Montpellier hosted **participatory workshops** bringing together nearly 30 farmers, researchers, and technical and financial stakeholders. These workshops aimed to collectively identify barriers and levers for adaptation through a serious game and thematic discussions.



▲ *Family picture” at the International Symposium on the future of agri-food cooperation*

International Symposium on “New Models of Agri-Food Development Cooperation in a Changing Geopolitical Context”

On 11 and 12 November 2025, the CIHEAM Zaragoza organized an international symposium on the future of agri-food cooperation, bringing together development agencies, multilateral organizations, governments, universities, research centers, and civil society actors. The event highlighted the need to transition to sustainable food systems, producing better rather than more, while preserving natural resources and biodiversity and promoting responsible innovation. The forum emphasized the importance

of an **inclusive, people-centered cooperation model**, where collaboration among all actors replaces isolated projects. Discussions also addressed the **current climate and geopolitical crisis context**, marked by a significant decline in official development assistance, underlining the need to rethink cooperation strategies.

[5th Mediterranean Innovation Agrifood Week \(MIAW 2025\)](#)

The Mediterranean Innovation Agrifood Week, organized annually by the CIHEAM Bari, serves as a key gathering for stakeholders engaged in food system innovation across

the Mediterranean and Africa. The event brings together organizations, companies, startups, experts, Business Support Organizations (BSO), and innovators to share ideas, solutions, and experiences aimed at building more sustainable food models.

For its fifth edition in 2025, the Mediterranean Innovation Agrifood Week aims to further expand this community of actors and strengthen collaborations between Italy, Mediterranean countries, and African nations. The objective is to stimulate **innovation**, promote **knowledge transfer**, and support the emergence of concrete solutions for sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food systems.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

16/01/2025	Agreement with the International Olive Council for a regional training course in Tunisia on the organoleptic evaluation of olive oil + CIHEAM Zaragoza
21/01/2025	Renewal of the memorandum of understanding between the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) within the framework of the SFS-MED platform + CIHEAM General Secretariat
05/03/2025	Observatoire du Sahel et du Sahara (OSS) + CIHEAM Montpellier
17/03/2025	Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights (MAFA) of Malta + CIHEAM General Secretariat
11/04/2025	(Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) + CIHEAM Bari
29/04/2025	Agreement with the International Olive Council for a workshop in Italy on the transfer of olive tree genetic resources and associated research data+ CIHEAM Zaragoza
10/05/2025	Letter of Agreement with FAO for an advanced course in Zaragoza on sustainable aquatic food value chains + CIHEAM Zaragoza
16/09/2025	Collaboration Agreement between the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) for a Sustainable Food Systems Training as part of the Mubadarat capacity building programme+ CIHEAM Zaragoza
17/01/2025	Letter of Agreement with FAO for an advanced course in Zaragoza on Wastewater Reuse for Agriculture + CIHEAM Zaragoza
18/09/2025	CARE International + CIHEAM Bari
07/10/2025	International Training Centre of International Labour Organization (ITCILO)+ CIHEAM Bari
11/12/2025	Memorandum of Understanding between the Arab Water Council (AWC) + CIHEAM General Secretariat
11/03/2026	Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations University (UNU-FLORES) + CIHEAM General Secretariat

RESEARCH CENTRES, UNIVERSITIES AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

17/01/2025	Collaboration Agreement between the IES Pablo Serrano + CIHEAM Zaragoza
01/02/2025	Agreement between the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights (MAFA), Malta + CIHEAM Zaragoza
08/04/2025	Agreement between the Instituto Social de la Marina (ISM) through Centro Nacional de Formación (CNF), for an advanced course on promoting decent working conditions in fisheries + CIHEAM Zaragoza
16/04/2025	Institut National Agronomique de Tunisie (INAT) + CIHEAM Montpellier
17/04/2025	Partnership between the University of Bari (UNIBA) + CIHEAM General Secretariat
22/04/2025	UCA Marrakech (Cadi Ayyad University of Marrakech), Morocco + CIHEAM Bari
28/04/2025	Memorandum of Understanding between the Agricultural Research Centre of Egypt (ARC) + CIHEAM General Secretariat
04/06/2025	Odesa State Agrarian University (OSAU), Ukraine + CIHEAM Bari / CIHEAM Secrétariat Général
04/06/2025	Agricultural Research Centre of Egypt (ARC) + CIHEAM Bari
20/06/2025	Agreement between MAFA -Malta Nitrate Action Plan + CIHEAM Zaragoza
20/06/2025	MoU between the Agricultural University of Tirana, Albania+ CIHEAM Zaragoza
23/06/2025	Local Health Authority (ASL) of Brindisi + CIHEAM Bari
16/07/2025	MoU between Fundación IMDEA Agua + CIHEAM Zaragoza
08/09/2025	Cooperation agreement between Euro-Mediterranean University “EMUNI” + CIHEAM Zaragoza
19/09/2025	Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute (EBI) + CIHEAM Bari
23/09/2025	Collaborative Agreement Contract (Malta Nitrate Action Plan) between the CITA + CIHEAM Zaragoza
06/11/2025	Consorzio Universitario per la Ricerca + CIHEAM Bari
12/10/2025	MoU between Lebanese University -Faculty of Agronomy + CIHEAM Zaragoza

PRIVATE COMPANIES AND EXHIBITIONS

02/06/2025	MoU between Knowledge SystemCunsultancy and Research Company (Rashidoon, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) + CIHEAM Zaragoza
11/09/2025	Collaboration Agreement between Sociedad Española de Ciencias Hortícolas (SECH) + CIHEAM Zaragoza
18/09/2025	Collaboration agreement between ExpoCaspé + CIHEAM Zaragoza





CIHEAM

The International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) is an intergovernmental organization. Established in 1962, it relies on its four agronomic Institutes (Bari, Chania, Montpellier and Zaragoza) and its General Secretariat in Paris to promote cooperation in the fields of agriculture, food, environment and rural development.

Through its activities in education, research and cooperation, the CIHEAM contributes to the development of sustainable and resilient agrifood systems. It places particular emphasis on youth and women, in the service of stability, development and integration in the Mediterranean.

Sharing Knowledge, Feeding the Future

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