

**CIHEAM
ZARAGOZA**

ANNUAL REPORT

2025





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Building networks for stronger food systems





ARAGOZA



| CIHEAM logo displayed in the CIHEAM Zaragoza auditorium.

A word from the director



The Mediterranean Sea bathes the shores of 22 countries across three continents: Spain, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Malta, Libya, Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Cyprus, Türkiye, Greece, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, San Marino, and France. The region has 546 million inhabitants, representing approximately 6.7% of the world's population.

The Mediterranean Basin has been the cradle of flourishing civilisations, with remarkable cultural diversity, historical achievements, and economic activity. Mediterranean countries share geographic proximity, historical legacies, environmental conditions, and cultural connections, but at the same time, the region is marked by significant socioeconomic heterogeneity, political trajectories, and a history of conflict. According to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, 10 Mediterranean countries are classified as advanced economies, while 12 are classified as emerging and developing. Following this classification, higher-income economies are predominantly concentrated along the European shore of the Mediterranean, whereas the lower- and middle-income economies are more prevalent across North Africa and the southern and eastern Mediterranean. This distribution clearly highlights the persistence of structural socioeconomic disparities across the region, particularly between the northern and southern and eastern shores.

This imbalance is evident in the agri-food sector. Food insecurity is largely concentrated in the southern and eastern part of the region and is further aggravated in

countries affected by civil or military conflicts, particularly in the Middle East. Similarly, water stress, intensified by global warming, primarily affects countries in the southern and eastern Mediterranean, although certain areas in the northern Mediterranean also face significant challenges. According to the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), water resources are unevenly distributed: the northern region holds the majority, while the eastern region accounts for 23% and the southern region only 5%. A similar pattern is observed in rural development, with higher levels of poverty and fewer opportunities in the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries.

A central challenge across the Mediterranean that extends beyond the agri-food sector, concerns education and development of human capital. Significant disparities exist in human development, particularly along the southern and eastern shores, where socioeconomic hardships often overlap with environmental vulnerabilities. The Human Development Index (HDI) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) highlights these asymmetries, emphasising that the richness of human life and individual capabilities must be at the core of development efforts. Moreover, addressing gender gaps through education and training is essential to expand opportunities and choices for all. Strengthening human capital in this way is crucial to building a more robust Mediterranean region, where people are equipped to thrive and contribute to sustainable development.

In short, CIHEAM's mission to promote cooperation in agri-food development remains fully justified. At CIHEAM Zaragoza, the headquarters of CIHEAM in Spain, we address key productive sectors—agriculture, livestock, fisheries, and aquaculture—while also dealing with natural resources, environmental sustainability and socioeconomic dimensions.

This report presents our capacity-building and knowledge-transfer activities carried out in 2025, organised into five main areas of specialisation. Each chapter outlines the Institute's priorities in these areas and the specific initiatives undertaken.

Raúl Compés López
Director of CIHEAM Zaragoza



| Aerial view of the CIHEAM Zaragoza building at the Aula Dei Campus.

CIHEAM Zaragoza at a glance

CIHEAM Zaragoza is the Spanish headquarters of CIHEAM (*Centre International de Hautes Études Agronomiques Méditerranéennes*), an intergovernmental organisation working towards multilateral cooperation for sustainable agri-food systems in the Mediterranean region. Founded in 1962 under the aegis of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Council of Europe, it operates through its 4 Institutes in Bari (Italy), Chania (Greece), Montpellier (France), and Zaragoza (Spain). CIHEAM is composed of 13 member countries (Albania, Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, and Türkiye) and its headquarters based in Paris.

CIHEAM Zaragoza was created in 1969 and is located on the Campus of Aula Dei, one of the most prestigious agriculture and food research and technology complexes in the country. From this top-level scientific and technical hub, the Institute offers international training and promotes applied research and development in agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forestry, the environment, and natural resources in the Mediterranean.

CIHEAM Zaragoza grows by networking and collaborating with experts and organisations around the world in a multilevel approach to build capacities, transfer knowledge and foster scientific diplomacy.

We develop our activities with the support of an extensive network of partners, including governments, international organisations, universities, research centres, foundations, professional associations, and the private sector.

Training and projects constitute the core activities of CIHEAM Zaragoza, whose approach is both international and multidisciplinary. The training activities are designed to build capacities through Master of Science (MSc) programmes and advanced courses for professionals.

The MSc programmes in which CIHEAM Zaragoza is involved are delivered over two academic years on a full-time basis (120 ECTS credits). They are jointly organised with Spanish universities and other national and international institutions. Each academic year, the Institute also organises a range of advanced courses for professionals as part of its capacity-building mission. This portfolio is updated annually to reflect the principal needs and priorities of its member countries.

The Institute further promotes innovation within the agri-food sector through research and cooperation projects that generate knowledge and foster practical, applied solutions. These project activities encompass a variety of undertakings, including research and innovation initiatives, technical assistance and development cooperation projects, as well as knowledge transfer and networking actions carried out through symposia, workshops, seminars and international meetings.

In addition, CIHEAM Zaragoza carries out other activities not directly linked to training or projects, reflecting its active presence in national and international forums dedicated to the generation and dissemination of knowledge.

**Building knowledge
and cooperation for
sustainable agri-food
systems.**



| Visit during the second annual meeting of the BELIS project in Novi Sad, Serbia. The project advances sustainable breeding of European legumes and is funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme.

Plant Production

I INTRODUCTION

Agricultural production systems in the Mediterranean, particularly in North Africa and the Middle East, are under increasing pressure from structural constraints and accelerating environmental change. Limited water availability, land scarcity and a long-standing underinvestment in agricultural innovation have resulted in a high dependence on imports, especially for cereals, which remain the cornerstone of regional diets and livestock systems. Climate change through rising temperatures, recurrent droughts and yield instability has further exacerbated vulnerabilities in food security and rural livelihoods.

Against this backdrop, strengthening plant production systems has become a strategic priority for the region. Enhancing crop productivity, resilience and nutritional value under water-limited and stress-prone conditions requires both long-term genetic improvement and the rapid deployment of modern breeding approaches. Advances such as speed breeding, genomics and new breeding techniques offer unprecedented opportunities to accelerate the development of high-yielding, drought-tolerant and climate-adapted varieties of cereals and vegetables, directly contributing to food security, sustainability and farmer resilience.

Progress in plant health through integrated pest management, combined with improved soil, nutrient, water, and land management practices –such as rotations, the reintroduction of legumes, intercropping, and cover crops– forms an interconnected pathway toward more sustainable and resilient cropping systems. Advanced sensing and numerical technologies further enable more precise decision-making across scales, benefiting farmers and policymakers alike. In the Mediterranean context, the olive sector holds particular strategic relevance, with countries such as Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Türkiye, Lebanon, and increasingly Egypt, playing a major economic and cultural role.

However, olive production systems across the region are facing mounting challenges. Climate stress, increasing production costs –particularly for labour and water– and structural weaknesses such as limited value addition, dependence on bulk markets, insufficient branding, labour shortages and quality and fraud risks are undermining competitiveness and long-term viability. In some contexts, geopolitical instability and conflict further compound these pressures, threatening both production and market access.

It is within this complex and evolving context that CIHEAM Zaragoza's actions in plant production must be understood. Through its education, training, research and cooperation activities, CIHEAM seeks to support Mediterranean countries in strengthening resilient, innovative and sustainable crop systems. The initiatives presented in the following sections respond directly to these shared regional challenges, providing technical solutions, building human and institutional capacities, and fostering cooperation to ensure that Mediterranean agriculture remains productive, competitive and climate resilient.

Strengthening plant production systems is a strategic pathway to food security, resilience and sustainability in the Mediterranean.

I TRAINING

International Master of Science in Plant Genetics, Genomics and Breeding

The 8th edition of the programme started in October 2025 (120 ECTS, 2 years). This is a cutting-edge programme designed to train future leaders in modern plant breeding. Delivered by more than 80 international experts and supported by leading research centres, it combines advanced knowledge in genetics, genomics, bioinformatics, phenomics and data science with classical breeding methods, preparing students to develop innovative, resilient and sustainable crop varieties adapted to current and future agricultural challenges. The programme offers a comprehensive first year of specialised coursework followed by a second year of research or professional placement in renowned institutions.

The Master is held in Zaragoza and is co-organised by CIHEAM Zaragoza and the University of Lleida (UdL), in collaboration with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), the Center for Plant Biotechnology and Genomics (CBGP), and the Agrotecnio research centre.

Graduates obtain an official Spanish master's degree from UdL and a CIHEAM MSc degree. They benefit from a dynamic, multicultural environment and a strong professional network across more than 30 countries.

The 2025-2027 edition of this MSc programme has a total of 23 students (12 women and 11 men) from 11 countries. Thirteen students received scholarships granted by CIHEAM Zaragoza.

Furthermore, during the first semester of 2025 a total of 22 students (11 women and 11 men) of the 7th edition (2023-2025) from 12 countries finished their Master thesis in different host institutions. Twelve scholarships were granted by CIHEAM Zaragoza.

International Master of Science in Olive Growing and Oil Technology

The 16th edition of the programme started in October 2025 (120 ECTS, 2 years). Designed to meet the increasing demand for high-level specialists in the sector, this programme's rationale is rooted in the significant global production of olives and olive oil, which is overwhelmingly concentrated in the Mediterranean Basin, where this agricultural system has flourished for millennia. Spain is highlighted as the leading olive oil producer and exporter, with considerable research and development efforts underpinning its technological progress in the field. The master's is held in Cordoba and in Seville, and is jointly organised by CIHEAM Zaragoza, the University of Cordoba (UCO), *Consejería de Agricultura, Pesca, Agua y Desarrollo Rural de la Junta de Andalucía*, *Instituto Andaluz de Investigación y Formación Agraria, Pesquera, Alimentaria y de la Producción Ecológica* (IFAPA), the International Olive Council (IOC), the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) and *Fundación Patrimonio Comunal Olivarero* (FPCO).

The 2025-2027 edition of this MSc programme commenced in October 2025 with 20 students (9 women and 11 men) from 11 countries, with a total of 4 scholarships awarded by CIHEAM Zaragoza.

Furthermore, during the first semester of 2025 a total of 11 students (1 woman and 10 men from 6 countries) of the 15th edition (2023-2025) finished their Master thesis from 6 countries in different host institutions, with a total of 4 scholarships awarded by CIHEAM Zaragoza.

Specialisation Course 'Sensory Analysis for Quality Improvement of Virgin Olive Oil'

This course was delivered face-to-face in Tunis, Tunisia, from 17 to 21 February 2025. Co-organised with the International Olive Council (IOC) and the Office National de l'Huile (ONH), the course brought together 25 participants from 9 countries with the aim of strengthening the technical capacity of tasters across IOC member countries by enhancing their ability to classify virgin olive oils based on international physicochemical and sensory standards.

Advanced Course 'Integrated Pest Management for Sustainable Agriculture'

Held in hybrid format from 17–22 March 2025 in Zaragoza and co-organised with FAO, the course welcomed 46 participants from 12 countries and provided updated knowledge and practical skills necessary to implement IPM effectively, fostering sustainable pest management and environmental stewardship. A total of 9 scholarships were awarded by CIHEAM Zaragoza.

Workshop 'Transfer of Olive Tree Genetic Resources and Associated Research Data: A Path to Solutions in the Adaptation to Climate Change'

The event was held face-to-face from 23 to 26 June 2025 in Rende, Italy. Co-organised with the IOC and CREA-OFA, this workshop attracted 42 participants from 17 countries with the aim of developing mechanisms for data sharing, strategic coordination, and scientific exchange among Mediterranean germplasm collections.

Training Course for Leaders of Virgin Olive Oil Tasting Panels

The course was held face-to-face in Zaragoza from 13 to 17 October 2025. Co-organised with the International Olive Council (IOC), this course hosted 19 participants from 19 countries to provide an in-depth understanding of the IOC standards and methods, focusing on the critical role of the Panel Leader in ensuring accurate, reliable, and standardized organoleptic assessment.

Advanced Course 'Agriculture 5.0: Leading the Future of Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability'

This activity was co-organised with ICARDA and held in hybrid format from 24 to 29 November 2025 in Zaragoza. The course attracted 63 participants from 16 countries, and the primary objective was to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of Agriculture 5.0, focusing on its tools, techniques, case studies and operational applications. A total of 12 scholarships were awarded, 8 by CIHEAM Zaragoza and 4 by ICARDA.



Participants in the Agriculture 5.0 advanced course, organised by CIHEAM Zaragoza and ICARDA, during a technical visit to cherry orchards in the Calatayud region (Zaragoza, Spain).

I PROJECTS

An EU-wide farm network demonstrating and promoting cost-effective IPM strategies (IPMWORKS)

IPMWORKS is a Horizon 2020 project (2020-2025) with a total budget of 6,000,005.00 euro with 31 partners from 17 countries. The objective of IPMWORKS is to promote the adoption of IPM strategies, based on an EU-wide network of farmers, who will both progress further in the adoption of IPM – through peer-to-peer learning and joint efforts – and demonstrate to other farmers that holistic IPM “works”; i.e. allows a low reliance on pesticides with better pest control, reduced costs and enhanced profitability. The project concluded on 31 March.

The final policy seminar, organised by CIHEAM Zaragoza in partnership with MEP Christophe Clergeau, was held at the European Parliament with the participation of 6 MEPs, the European Commission Director responsible for Plant Health and other key stakeholders in Brussels on 15 January. The policy seminar was attended by over 200 people, 67 in person and 137 online. Entitled ‘Supporting Farmers to Reduce Pesticide Use through Effective Implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM)’, the seminar addressed critical challenges in sustainable agriculture. The final project webinar took place on 12 March, showcasing key communication and dissemination tools, including demonstration events, the project toolbox, e-learning modules, and social media channels. The webinar also featured an interactive policy workshop, facilitating stakeholder engagement on implementation strategies. Finally, a dedicated section on the IPMWORKS website was created to highlight all political engagement activities, ensuring continued accessibility of these important resources.

Breeding European Legumes for Increased Sustainability (BELIS)

BELIS is a Horizon Europe project (2023-2028) with a total budget of 7,077,914.74 euro and 34 partners from 18 countries. The BELIS project pursues three principal objectives: firstly, to develop tools and methodologies for cost-effective breeding programmes and deliver proofs of concept, working with and for breeders; secondly, to facilitate the economic and regulatory environment surrounding variety registration, variety recommendation, and business models; and thirdly, to implement an efficient, ambitious, and durable transfer of innovation through the BELIS platform, which encompasses a network of breeders and actors from scientific research, extension services, and seed, food, and feed industries, complemented by a comprehensive training portfolio.

During 2025, CIHEAM Zaragoza collaborated closely with *Terres Innovia* and the project coordinator, INRAE, to consolidate the BELIS network (Legume Breeding for Agroecological Transition in Europe) and launch the webinar ‘BELIS Network. Legume breeding for agroecological transition in Europe’ on 23 January 2025. This first webinar aimed to launch the BELIS network and enhance the collaboration with external actors of the project. BELIS was represented at the MEDIET project concluding meeting and the CIHEAM BEANS Meta Network Constitutional General Assembly, both held at CIHEAM Bari on 4 and 5 June 2025.

To mark Fascination of Plants Day, BELIS and its sister project ‘Legume Generation’ prepared a collaborative social media campaign, highlighting the importance of legumes and presenting fascinating insights about these crops. Several interview videos were published on the BELIS YouTube channel, and the second issue of the BELIS Newsletter was released in June 2025.

BELIS also convened its annual meeting on 9-11 September in Novi Sad (Serbia). CIHEAM Zaragoza coordinated the participation of the Stakeholder Advisory Board and supported partner engagement activities. The Communication Plan was subsequently updated.

Education for the Transition to Sustainable AgriFood Systems (EduSAF)

EduSAF is an Erasmus+ project (2024-2027) with a total budget of 799,232 euro. Composed of 9 partners from 6 countries (5 universities from Argentina, Bolivia, and Uruguay, and 4 European institutions from Belgium, Spain, and Portugal), this initiative aims to modernise higher education in Latin America by equipping universities with the tools and expertise to address challenges in sustainable agri-food systems, including environmental sustainability, climate change resilience, and digital technology integration.

In 2025, under CIHEAM Zaragoza's coordination, key achievements included the project kick-off meeting in February, the Annual Meeting in Cochabamba (10-14 November) which hosted the thematic workshop 'Agroecology and Dialogue of Knowledge', and coordination of participation in the training course 'Sustainable Agri-Food Systems: Research and Practice in Management & Marketing' delivered by Ghent University (15-18 September), with 10 participants from South American partner universities attending in person and 15 online.

Integrated Action Against Abandonment of Vineyard in the Province of Teruel (ACTIVITÉ)

ACTIVITÉ is a project funded by FITE (Fondo de Inversiones de Teruel) (2025) with a total budget of 88,723.73 euro. The project consortium comprises the Research Centre for Agri-food Technology of Aragon, CIHEAM Zaragoza, University of Zaragoza, University of A Coruña, *Instituto de Ciencias Agrarias* – CSIC, and *Centro de Transferencia Agroalimentaria*. The initiative addresses the critical issue of vineyard abandonment in the province of Teruel through an integrated, multi-stakeholder approach. CIHEAM Zaragoza undertakes the organisation of the project's Final Seminar, bringing together Mediterranean countries facing similar challenges.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Together with the University of Lleida, in March, CIHEAM Zaragoza organised the webinar '**New Breeding Techniques (NBTs)—a game-changer for global food security and sustainable agriculture**' with experts from the public and private sectors to discuss the transformative potential of NBTs and their role in shaping a more sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural future. Later in April, CIHEAM Zaragoza and the University of Córdoba organised the webinar '**New Marketing Strategies for EVOO**' with experts from the public and private sectors to discuss the trends and strategies that will mark the future of EVOO.

On 1st December, CIHEAM Zaragoza, together with the Remedia+ network, organised the webinar '**Mitigation and adaptation to climate change through regenerative practices in Mediterranean cropping systems**'. The webinar explored some areas of action for increasing resilience of Mediterranean agriculture, such as regenerative practices, nitrogen cycle management, rotations and livestock-crop integration. A total of 86 persons attended this webinar, where CIHEAM Zaragoza also announced their activities for 2026 around the topic.



| Field visit to a cattle farm during a meeting of the Re-Livestock project, which promotes innovative practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen the resilience of livestock systems. The initiative is funded by the European Union.

Animal Production

I INTRODUCTION

Livestock production in the Mediterranean region is becoming increasingly complex due to a combination of environmental, economic, and social pressures. Climate change is intensifying heat waves, extending drought periods, and increasing the variability of rainfall, all of which directly affect forage availability, animal comfort, and overall productivity. Water scarcity is a particularly critical constraint, as many Mediterranean areas already operate under limited water resources, and competition between agriculture, livestock, and urban consumption is growing. These pressures increase production costs, especially for small and medium-scale farmers. At the same time, livestock production faces a growing negative perception among the public, often linked to concerns about greenhouse gas emissions, animal welfare, and resource use. This social pressure can influence policy, market access, and consumer choices, adding another layer of uncertainty for producers.

In this challenging context, efficient nutritional management becomes a key tool for improving sustainability and profitability. By optimising feed formulations, using locally available resources, and adjusting diets to match animal requirements more precisely, farmers can improve feed conversion, reduce waste, and lower methane emissions per unit of product. Better nutrition also helps animals cope with heat stress and variable feed quality, which are common under Mediterranean conditions. Alongside nutrition, genetic improvement represents a relatively cheap and long-term solution for increasing system efficiency. Selecting animals that are better adapted to heat, capable of utilising low-quality forages, and more resistant to disease can significantly improve productivity without large increases in inputs. Genetic progress is cumulative and permanent, making it a cost-effective strategy for both intensive and extensive systems. When combined, sound nutritional management and targeted genetic improvement offer practical pathways to maintain livestock productivity, reduce environmental impact, and respond to evolving social expectations in the Mediterranean region.

CIHEAM Zaragoza training programmes and projects help address these challenges by strengthening the technical skills of livestock professionals across the Mediterranean. Through specialised courses, applied research, and collaborative projects on nutrition, genetics, climate adaptation, and efficient resource use, CIHEAM Zaragoza generates practical solutions and regional knowledge that support more resilient, productive, and socially accepted livestock systems.

Better nutrition and adapted genetics can sustain livestock productivity under increasing climate and resource pressures.

I TRAINING

International Master of Science in Animal Nutrition

The 10th edition of this MSc programme started in October 2025 (120 ECTS, 2 years). The primary goal of the master's, which is jointly offered by CIHEAM Zaragoza and the University of Zaragoza, is to train experts capable of taking on technical roles and conducting high-impact research to achieve profitable and sustainable livestock production. The comprehensive curriculum is structured across two years, covering principles of nutrition, feed safety, feeding for various production types, and includes a mandatory professional traineeship and an original Master thesis research component. In this edition, a total of 19

students (8 women and 11 men) from 12 countries have registered, with a total of 6 scholarships awarded by CIHEAM Zaragoza.

Furthermore, during the first semester of 2025 a total of 14 students (8 women, 6 men) from 9 countries from the 9th edition (2023-2025) finished their Master thesis in different host institutions, with a total of 10 scholarships awarded by CIHEAM Zaragoza.

International Master of Science in Animal Breeding and Reproduction Biotechnology

In June 2025, a total of 16 students (12 women, 4 men) finished the first year of the 8th edition of this MSc programme (academic year 2025-2026) (120 ECTS, 2 years) and 15 (12 women and 3 men) from 9 countries finished their Master thesis in different host institutions, with a total of 3 scholarships awarded by CIHEAM Zaragoza. This programme is jointly organised by CIHEAM Zaragoza, the Polytechnic University of Valencia (UPV), and the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB).

Advanced Course 'Cattle Breeding for Low Methane Emissions: From Farm Measurement to Genetic Progress'

CIHEAM Zaragoza hosted this course from 24 to 28 February as part of the Re-Livestock project and within the framework of the Mediterranean Network on Greenhouse Gases in Agriculture. Organised together with the Re-Livestock project, NEIKER, GRA, WUR and INIA-CSIC, the objective of the course was to teach the process required to include methane as a trait in breeding programmes, one of the most promising tools to decrease methane emissions in ruminants. The course attracted 43 participants (21 women and 22 men) from 21 countries across Europe, Africa, America, and Oceania. A total of 10 scholarships were awarded, 7 by GRA and 3 by the Re-Livestock Project.

I PROJECTS

Extensive Livestock Farming and Pastoralism (PASTINNOVA)

This PRIMA Project (2022-2025) has a budget of 2,750,000 euros and 20 partners from 12 Mediterranean countries. The key objective of Pastinnova was to re-enforce the sustainability, profitability and resilience of small pastoral farms, by setting up innovations, business and organisational models to valorise their full potential as drivers of the agro-ecological transition in livestock production.

During the final stage of this project, PASTINNOVA was particularly active in disseminating the results of the project across the member countries. CIHEAM Zaragoza, in its role as project dissemination and training lead, organised five thematic webinars which were attended by more than 300 participants and contributed to developing the White Paper on Mediterranean Pastoralism, 2 policy briefs, and 18 fact sheets. CIHEAM Zaragoza was also involved in an exchange visit to Catalonia in March involving two young female livestock farmers from Lebanon, and a Regional Workshop in March on 'Sharing experiences on common innovations' in collaboration with Italian partners supporting the participation of two guest speakers. Finally, CIHEAM Zaragoza organised the PASTINNOVA Final Conference in Kusadasi (Türkiye) on 11 April, as a side session of the Seminar on Agrosilvopastoral Futures, sharing the main results and lessons learned from PASTINNOVA with more than 100 participants.

Resilient Livestock Farming Systems under Climate Change (Re-Livestock)

This Horizon Europe Project (2022-2027) has a budget of 9,560,000 euros and involves 37 partners from 13 countries. The overall objective of Re-Livestock is to evaluate and mobilise the adoption of innovative practices applied cross-scale (animal, herd, farm, sector and region) to reduce GHG emissions from livestock farming systems and increase their capacity to deal with potential climate change impacts.

CIHEAM Zaragoza leads the Re-Livestock work package on communication, dissemination and capacity

building and has contributed to the communication and social media activities, providing contents for the website and newsletters 4 and 5, creating a leaflet highlighting project contributions to the 76th Annual Meeting of the EAAP in Austria in August and recording 11 video interviews with consortium members during the project meeting in Valencia from 18 to 20 November. In terms of capacity building, CIHEAM Zaragoza organised the training course on cattle breeding for methane emissions abatement that is described above and the first Re-Livestock webinar 'Global Warming Metrics in Livestock Systems' held on 15 January attracting over 100 participants.

I OTHER ACTIVITIES

Together with the University of Zaragoza, CIHEAM Zaragoza organised a webinar on 7 April: '**Insects as an Alternative Source of Protein in Animal Feeding**' inviting experts from the public and private sectors to discuss the impact, opportunities and challenges of using insects in animal feed.

CIHEAM Zaragoza was fully engaged in the organisation of the **Pasture Networks** (Mediterranean and Mountain Sub-Networks) International Seminar in Kusadasi/Aydin (Türkiye) on 9-11 April, together with FAO and the Aydin Adnan Menderes University. The Seminar '**Agrosilvopastoral Futures: Bridging Tradition and Innovation in Mediterranean and Mountain Grasslands**' featured sessions on building resilience of production systems through biodiversity and good practices, innovations in pastures and forages management, data and technologies for sustainable systems, and innovations on pastoralism (with the Pastinnova project). There was also a session devoted to young researchers' contributions, and FAO presented its Global Plan of Action of the Sustainable Livestock Transformation. The Seminar attracted 116 participants from 17 countries and CIHEAM Zaragoza financed the participation of 7 people from CIHEAM countries.

CIHEAM Zaragoza collaborated in the organisation and promotion of the **21st AIDA Conference on Animal Production** held on 3 and 4 June, a biannual event that gathers the Spanish animal science academic community.

CIHEAM Zaragoza also participated in the International Workshop '**Innovation and Resilience of Silvopastoral Goat Systems**' (Chefchaouen, Morocco, 25 June 2025) and presented the challenges and innovations of the Spanish extensive and pastoral goat systems. CIHEAM Zaragoza made a field visit to the northern Region of Morocco in October in preparation of a local development project funded by AECID (Spanish Development Cooperation Agency) focusing on the improvement and valorisation of traditional cheese produced by women.

CIHEAM Zaragoza took part in the 30th meeting of the **Mediterranean Animal Health Network (REMESA)**, held in Nouakchott (Mauritania) on 2-3 July and delivered a presentation on Animal Welfare Regulation and Labelling.

As part of the cooperation **agreement established between CIHEAM Zaragoza and the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights of Malta (MAFA)**, CIHEAM Zaragoza organised a visit of Irish pig production experts to Malta to provide technical assistance and develop capacity-building activities through visits to local farms and specialised workshops for livestock farmers on the islands of Malta and Gozo.

CIHEAM Zaragoza administrator Antonio López-Francos published the article 'Mediterranean pastoralism – a vital part of sustainable extensive livestock farming: Lessons learnt from the PASTINNOVA project' and CIHEAM Zaragoza administrator Andrés Schlageter published 'Strengthening Mediterranean livestock production under climate change conditions'.



| Students in the International Master in Sustainable Fisheries Management during a practical session analysing samples from the "Descarsel" research campaign at the University of Alicante.

Fisheries and Aquaculture

I INTRODUCTION

Capture fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean provide an excellent source of high-quality nutrients and make an important contribution to job creation in coastal areas. According to the FAO, seafood supply from both capture fisheries and aquaculture provides about 17%¹ of the total supply of animal protein. At the same time, international trade of fish and fishery products has expanded significantly in recent decades, with about 36% of the production being exported. These statistics, however, do not reveal the concern about the current situation of fishery resources. Thus, overexploited stocks, limited monitoring and enforcement capacity, habitat degradation and a long-standing underinvestment in research, innovation and value chain development have resulted in declining fishing productivity and growing dependence on seafood imports in several countries. Moreover, climate change—through rising sea temperatures, marine heatwaves, shifting species distributions and increasing ecosystem instability—has further intensified direct and indirect impacts on aquaculture production systems causing production losses, vulnerabilities in food security, coastal and rural livelihoods and maritime economies. Minimising the impact of fishing and aquaculture has become an objective of international agreements, regional directives, and national regulations.

In this framework, strengthening Mediterranean fisheries management and expanding sustainable aquaculture systems have become strategic priorities for the Mediterranean region. Rebuilding fish stocks, improving gear selectivity, enhancing traceability and combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing require coordinated national and regional governance, science-based management and technological modernisation. In parallel, scaling up resilient aquaculture systems—particularly marine finfish, shellfish and emerging low-trophic species—offers a pathway to improve

production performance, stabilise supply and prices, minimise environmental impacts, and support coastal development. Advances in reproduction, genetics, nutrition, health management, digital monitoring and automation, and recirculation, offshore production and IMTA technologies provide new opportunities to increase productivity while minimising environmental impacts.

Within Mediterranean seafood systems, marine aquaculture occupies a strategic position. The region is a global reference for the farming of European seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*) and gilthead seabream (*Sparus aurata*), with leading production in Greece and Türkiye, and significant development in Egypt and Tunisia. Mediterranean marine aquaculture is also a reference on the production of meagre (*Argyrosomus regius*), blue fin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) and other new species, e.g. Senegalese sole (*Solea senegalensis*). Shellfish farming—particularly mussels, clams and oysters—also plays an important economic and environmental role in several coastal areas. Beyond its economic contribution, aquaculture is increasingly embedded in coastal territorial planning, employment generation and market supply.

Seafood provides around 17% of the world's animal protein, making sustainable fisheries and aquaculture essential for future food security.

¹ FAO. 2022. *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022. Towards Blue Transformation*. Rome, FAO. p. xx

However, fisheries and aquaculture systems across the region face important challenges. Persistent overfishing in parts of the basin, high discards, and incidental catches, impact on the seafloor and benthic communities, limited stock recovery, greenhouse gas emissions, rising energy and feed costs, animal health risks, biosecurity threats, spatial conflicts in coastal zones, limited value addition, dependence of markets on imports, and traceability and fraud concerns are undermining long-term sustainability. Climate-driven changes in species distribution, the arrival of non-indigenous species and geopolitical instability in certain areas further compound these pressures.

In this complex and evolving context, it is of maximum interest to train experts able to advise stakeholders in the diverse world of fisheries and aquaculture. CIHEAM Zaragoza focus its actions on education, training, research and cooperation activities, including collaboration with regional frameworks such as the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM). CIHEAM Zaragoza seeks to support Mediterranean countries in strengthening their governance and sustainable seafood systems. The initiatives presented in the following sections respond directly to current regional challenges by promoting science-based management, sustainable and innovative production technologies, and capacity building to ensure that Mediterranean fisheries and aquaculture remain productive, competitive and climate-resilient.

I TRAINING

International Master of Science in Sustainable Fisheries Management

The 8th edition of this programme (120 ECTS, 2 years) began in October 2025. Jointly organised by CIHEAM Zaragoza and the University of Alicante, the programme trains multidisciplinary professionals capable of promoting the sustainable management of fisheries by integrating biological, economic, legal and social perspectives. This edition enrolled 12 students (8 women and 4 men) from 8 countries, with 7 scholarships awarded by CIHEAM Zaragoza.

Held in Alicante, Spain, this International Master benefits from the collaboration of the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, through the General Secretariat of Fisheries, and *Casa Mediterráneo*, as well as the technical support of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

In June and July 2025, 8 students (5 women and 3 men) from 6 countries completed the 7th edition (2023-2025) by defending their Master theses in various host institutions, supported by 5 scholarships awarded by CIHEAM Zaragoza. This edition benefited from collaboration with the Association of Large Tuna Freezers, the National Association of Freezer Tuna Shipowners, and the Organisation of Producers of Frozen Tuna.

International Master of Science in Marine Aquaculture

In June 2025, 8 students (4 women, 4 men) from 6 countries completed the first year of the 13th edition (2024-2026) of the International Master of Science in Marine Aquaculture (120 ECTS, 2 years), with 4 scholarships awarded by CIHEAM Zaragoza. Jointly organised with the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, the programme trains aquaculture professionals through advanced scientific and technical education, focusing on commercial production of key species, particularly those from the Mediterranean. These students began their second year of training in October at various host institutions, supported by 4 scholarships awarded by CIHEAM Zaragoza. Held in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, the second year is dedicated to research methodology and a Master thesis.

Advanced Course 'Promoting Decent Working Conditions in Fisheries'

CIHEAM Zaragoza, together with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Spanish Social Marine Institute (ISM), and the Spanish National Institute for Safety and Health at Work (INSST),

organised this advanced course held at the Isla Cristina National Training Centre (Huelva, Spain) from 19 to 23 May. The course aimed to strengthen institutional capacity to implement international frameworks protecting vulnerable fisheries workers and promoting sustainable working conditions. The course attracted 31 participants (13 women and 18 men) in face-to-face modality from 19 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. A total of 28 scholarships were awarded, 3 by CIHEAM Zaragoza, 8 by FAO, 6 by FAO/ISM and 11 by ISM.

Advanced Course 'Transitioning to more Sustainable Aquatic Food Value Chains'

CIHEAM Zaragoza, together with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), organised this advanced course held from 3 to 7 November at CIHEAM Zaragoza in hybrid modality. The course aimed to equip professionals with methodologies to analyse value chains and develop strategies for economically viable, socially inclusive, and environmentally responsible aquatic food systems. The course attracted 35 participants (19 women and 16 men) from 15 countries across North Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. A total of 14 scholarships were awarded, 8 by CIHEAM Zaragoza and 6 by FAO.

I PROJECTS

Actions for Climate Transition by developing Future Aquaculture Strategies and Technologies (ActFast)

ActFast is a Horizon Europe project (2025-2029) with a total budget of 4,497,394.07 euro. Composed of 31 partners from 13 countries, this initiative focuses on testing and validating climate adaptation and mitigation solutions for European aquaculture across the Mediterranean Sea, Deltas, Central-Eastern European inland waters, and North-East Atlantic Ocean.

Alongside CIHEAM Bari, CIHEAM Zaragoza leads the project's training activities and knowledge mobilisation efforts. In 2025, CIHEAM Zaragoza co-organised an 'Aquaculture and Climate Change' webinar with the OCCAM project on 25 November, attracting 173 persons. Additionally, the Institute participated in Aquaculture Europe 2025 (Valencia, 22-25 September), organised by the European Aquaculture Society, where the ActFast project team engaged with professionals from across the sector to discuss sustainability challenges and advances.

I OTHER ACTIVITIES

CIHEAM Zaragoza, together with the University of Alicante, organised the webinar '**Does Fisheries Management Work? Success Stories**' on 3 April. The session explored effective fisheries management strategies implemented in different contexts, demonstrating how certain measures have generated positive environmental, economic and social outcomes. The webinar featured three case studies: the evolution of Palamós fishers towards more efficient fisheries and economic management (Fishers' Guild of Palamós), shared resource management of blackspot seabream in Morocco (IAV Hassan II), and the effectiveness of marine reserves for fisheries management (University of Alicante). The session also included a presentation of the International Master in Sustainable Fisheries Management co-organised by both institutions.

CIHEAM Zaragoza participated in the **II Aquaculture Morocco International Conference (AMIC 2025)**, held in Agadir, Morocco, on 3-4 December. This key event brought together leading experts in genetics, nutrition, and sustainable aquaculture. The Institute's participation facilitated engagement with international specialists and networking with alumni from the International Master of Science in Marine Aquaculture now actively working in the sector, reinforcing CIHEAM Zaragoza's commitment to knowledge sharing and sustainable aquaculture development.



| Participants visiting Biosanz organic farm during the Sustainable Food Systems training organised by CIHEAM Zaragoza within the Mubadarat capacity-building programme.

Water, Soil, and the Environment

I INTRODUCTION

Mediterranean agriculture and rural development are among the sectors most exposed to environmental pressures. Water scarcity, soil degradation, biodiversity loss and the increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires are already constraining agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods. These pressures are driven by population growth, economic development and rising demand for natural resources, and are further exacerbated by climate change, which amplifies hydrological variability, accelerates land degradation processes and increases the vulnerability of agricultural ecosystems.

Competition for water resources is intensifying across the region as agriculture and ecosystems increasingly depend on limited and unevenly distributed supplies. At the same time, soil degradation caused by erosion and salinisation is reducing soil fertility and its capacity to provide essential ecosystem services. Moreover, pollution from agricultural and non-agricultural sources, together with ecosystem degradation, further undermines environmental quality and resilience. These dynamics directly affect food security, income generation, rural employment and territorial stability, particularly in the southern and eastern Mediterranean, where institutional and financial constraints often limit adaptive capacity.

In this context, ensuring environmental integrity requires increased mobilisation of responsible public and private investment aligned with sustainability objectives. Sustainable management of water, soil and natural resources is a strategic priority, closely linked to the achievement of key Sustainable Development Goals; SDGs 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Action) and 15 (Life on Land). Integrating environmental considerations into agricultural, rural and territorial policies, improving water governance and promoting efficient resource use are essential to enhance climate resilience and long-term sustainability.

CIHEAM Zaragoza's activities in water, soil and the environment directly address these shared challenges by promoting responsible investment aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through advanced training, applied research and international cooperation. By fostering interdisciplinary approaches, supporting evidence-based policymaking and promoting innovative and sustainable solutions, the initiatives presented contribute to strengthening human and institutional capacities and to advancing more resilient, inclusive and environmentally sustainable agro-environmental systems across the Mediterranean.

Water scarcity, soil degradation and climate change are placing unprecedented pressure on agricultural systems and rural livelihoods.

TRAINING

International Master of Science in Sustainable Water Management and Governance in Natural and Agricultural Environments

In June 2025, 16 students (9 women, 7 men) from 9 countries completed the first year of the 3rd edition of the International Master of Science in Sustainable Water Management and Governance in Natural and Agricultural Environments (120 ECTS, 2 years), with 15 scholarships awarded by CIHEAM Zaragoza. The programme trains future professionals in water management and governance with an integrated interdisciplinary vision covering hydrological, economic, regulatory, and technological aspects. In October, these students began their second year of training, dedicated to research methodology and a Master thesis, at various host institutions.

This International Master is organised by CIHEAM Zaragoza with the collaboration of Spain's Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), Spain's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Tragsa Group, the *Sociedad Mercantil Estatal de Infraestructuras Agrarias* (SEIASA), and the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA).

Advanced Course 'Wastewater Reuse for Agriculture'

CIHEAM Zaragoza, together with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), organised this advanced course that was held from 20 to 25 October at CIHEAM Zaragoza in hybrid modality. The course aimed to equip professionals with knowledge on treatment technologies, regulatory frameworks, and risk assessment for the safe and effective adoption of treated wastewater in arid and semi-arid agricultural regions. The course attracted 34 participants, 21 attended face-to-face and 13 on line (18 women and 16 men) from 12 countries across North Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. A total of 19 scholarships were awarded, 4 by CIHEAM Zaragoza, 2 by CIHEAM/AECID, 11 by FAO and 2 by ICARDA.



Practical session of the advanced course Wastewater Reuse for Agriculture, organised by CIHEAM Zaragoza and ICARDA in collaboration with FAO, AECID and IWMI.

I PROJECTS

Green Nudges for Sustainable Forestry and Agricultural Practices (ForestAgriGreenNudge)

This Horizon Europe project (2024-2028) has a total budget of 2,615,435 euro with 16 partners from 12 countries. This innovative initiative uses behavioural science to encourage more sustainable decision-making in agriculture and forestry. By applying subtle interventions called 'green nudges', the project seeks to support land managers and policymakers in overcoming cognitive biases and adopting environmentally sustainable practices.

During 2025, CIHEAM Zaragoza played a pivotal role in organising the Green Nudge Conference held for this project on 21 May in Brussels. The Institute also coordinated the establishment of the ForestAgriGreenNudge network at national level, aimed at connecting farmers, foresters, policymakers and AKIS coordination bodies to co-create solutions related to green nudges, both nationally and in alignment with the wider European network. Throughout the year, the project made significant progress in strengthening both the Spanish and European ForestAgriGreenNudge Networks, with CIHEAM Zaragoza contributing actively to their coordination and development. In its capacity as National Focal Point, CIHEAM Zaragoza distributed targeted surveys to farmers, AKIS actors, and consumers to better understand sectoral needs in Spain and across Europe, thereby enhancing the evidence base for policy development.

I OTHER ACTIVITIES

CIHEAM Zaragoza participated in the **International Water and Irrigation Exhibition SMAGUA 2025**, held in Zaragoza from 4 to 6 March. The event attracted over 600 exhibitors from 30 countries and brought together experts, businesses, and stakeholders to address key challenges for the water sector and promote innovative solutions. CIHEAM Zaragoza's training programmes in sustainable water management and governance were presented at the event, reinforcing the Institute's commitment to training specialists in water management and governance to ensure the quality and availability of water resources for current and future generations.

CIHEAM Zaragoza also hosted the **Workshop on Sustainable Food Systems for Civil Society** in September, co-organised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Med's Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation and AECID. The workshop, which brought together 25 participants, aimed to empower civil society organisations from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Lebanon to design and implement projects focused on sustainable agriculture using Nature-based Solutions (NbS).

CIHEAM Zaragoza hosted the commemorative event **'Irrigation of Tomorrow: Sustainability of Irrigation Modernisation (Technical, Environmental and Financial)'** organised by CINGRAL, a consultancy specialising in rural development, water and the environment, to celebrate its 40th anniversary on 20 November. The event brought together specialists, irrigation communities, and sector representatives for technical discussions on the sustainability of irrigation modernisation, addressing water and energy efficiency, financing models, and regional support strategies.

As part of the cooperation **agreement established between CIHEAM Zaragoza and the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights of Malta (MAFA)**, CIHEAM Zaragoza and CITA Aragon are helping Maltese authorities to determine the source of nitrate pollution on the island of Malta in order to implement measures to improve the quality status of its water bodies.



| María José Velilla, livestock farmer in Alfamén (Zaragoza, Spain) and member of the Oviaragón cooperative (Grupo Pastores), featured in the EU-funded GRASS CEILING project promoting women's innovation and leadership in rural areas.

Economy and Development

I INTRODUCTION

The southern Mediterranean is an economically strategic region of both regional and international importance, characterised by diverse national contexts and development trajectories. Several countries in the region have experienced notable progress in production, employment, income and trade; however, these advances have not always translated into commensurate improvements in social well-being, including education, health, poverty reduction and equitable access to opportunities.

One of the key challenges remains strengthening the capacity of productive systems to generate high-quality formal employment, particularly for young people and women. While economic growth has been sustained in many cases, it has not always been sufficient to absorb the labour force, leading to productivity constraints, market rigidities and mismatches between educational provision and labour market needs.

In this context, agriculture continues to play a strategic role as an economic driver, a guarantor of food security and a major source of employment and income for rural populations. However, the sector faces increasing climatic (droughts, floods, frosts, pests, etc.), health-related and market risks that affect income stability and resilience.

Sustainable well-being requires economic growth that advances together with equity, human capital and environmental sustainability.

Population well-being remains a central development objective, encompassing not only sufficient and stable income, but also access to quality employment, social protection and equal opportunities, irrespective of gender. It also depends on access to essential services—healthcare, safe drinking water, sanitation, energy and adequate housing—which are closely linked to quality of life and human development.

In particular, health and nutrition are key determinants of increased life expectancy and reduced avoidable mortality. Likewise, access to quality education, lifelong learning and skills development aligned with labour market needs is essential to improving productivity, economic resilience and competitiveness, as well as fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.

At the same time, increasing pressure on natural resources—especially water and land—poses additional challenges for food security and production systems. Their sustainable management is therefore critical for long-term well-being and climate change mitigation.

Addressing these interconnected economic, social and environmental challenges requires an integrated approach, in which economic growth is accompanied by equity, human capital development, social protection and environmental sustainability, ensuring inclusive and sustainable well-being across the region.

From CIHEAM Zaragoza, we have actively contributed throughout 2025 to training, research and cooperation activities in agri-food systems, addressing key challenges related to employment, food security, climate resilience, gender equality and human capital development. Through capacity building, innovation and knowledge transfer, these activities support more inclusive, sustainable and resilient agri-food systems across the Mediterranean and beyond.

TRAINING

Forthcoming Master's Degree in Agri-food Marketing and Entrepreneurship

In November 2025, the programme specification for this university master's degree was submitted to the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation for evaluation, certification and accreditation within the Spanish university system, in accordance with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The master's programme (60 ECTS, 1 year) is jointly organised by CIHEAM Zaragoza and the four public universities of the Campus Iberus Consortium (University of Zaragoza, University of Lleida, University of La Rioja and the Public University of Navarre).

The first edition of the programme will run from October 2026 to June 2027. Teaching and learning activities will include lectures, case studies, seminars, workshops, problem-solving exercises, independent study, and individual and group coursework and projects.

The master's programme is designed for graduates seeking to develop strong competencies in entrepreneurship and marketing within the agri-food sector. It combines advanced food marketing strategies with innovative methodologies for business creation, business model design and business planning, preparing participants to successfully launch and lead their own projects.

The aim of the programme is to strengthen young professionals' capacity to identify opportunities, develop innovative products and services, and create sustainable businesses that contribute to economic and social growth, promote job creation and support generational renewal in the agri-food sector.

Graduates are awarded an official Spanish university master's degree by the four universities mentioned above, as well as a master's degree issued by CIHEAM.



Lecture during the advanced course Applications of Artificial Intelligence in the Agri-Food Sector, co-organised by CIHEAM Zaragoza and ICARDA in Zaragoza, September–October 2025.

Advanced Course ‘Applications of Artificial Intelligence in the Agri-Food Sector’

From 29 September to 3 October 2025, this specialised course was delivered in Zaragoza in hybrid format. Co-organised with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), the course brought together 40 participants (24 women and 16 men), 18 attending in person and 22 on-line, from 12 countries. Its objective was to provide a comprehensive overview of the application of artificial intelligence in the agri-food sector, insights into the digital transformation of the agri-food system and the role of AI in Agri-Food 4.0, as well as techniques applicable to agriculture, livestock production, the food industry, trade and supply chain management, while also exploring emerging AI technologies and their potential impact on the future of the sector. A total of 11 scholarships were awarded, 7 by CIHEAM Zaragoza and 4 by ICARDA.

I PROJECTS

Gender Equality in Rural and Agricultural Innovation Systems (GRASS CEILING)

This Horizon Europe project (2023-2025) has a total budget of 2,817,498.75 euro. Composed of 25 partners from 11 countries, the European initiative aims to empower women to lead socio-ecological innovation in farming and rural communities, strengthening rural resilience and advancing EU and UN goals on gender equality and sustainable development. Nine multi-actor Living Labs, representing diverse agricultural and rural realities as well as varying socio-political contexts in Croatia, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, Spain and Sweden, are at the core of the project.

During 2025, CIHEAM Zaragoza coordinated key project events, including the 8th Spanish Living Lab meeting in Zaragoza in April. Communication activities included the production of 54 Human Stories videos; campaigns for International Women’s Day, International Day of Rural Women, and the RUWI and PARCA awards campaigns; content production for the project’s website and social media channels, and exhibition materials for the Final Showcase Event in Brussels in December. CIHEAM Zaragoza was also actively involved in dissemination and exploitation of results, launching the GRASS CEILING MOOC, and organising a dedicated webinar for female academics in December and holding an in-person session with consortium members and key stakeholders to co-create the MOOC’s dissemination strategy.

Preparing Multi-Actor Projects in a Co-creative Way (PREMIERE)

This Coordination and Support Action (CSA) project under Horizon Europe (2023-2027) has a total budget of 4,998,268.75 euro. Bringing together 15 partners from 12 countries, the project aims to strengthen knowledge and innovation systems in agriculture, forestry and rural areas across Europe, accelerating research and innovation (R&I) for sustainable and resilient food, farming and land- and sea-based systems.

PREMIERE promotes the Multi-Actor Approach (MAA) – an inclusive, co-creative model that places practitioners and end-users at the centre of the research process and values diverse knowledge. The project supports the development of well-prepared, coherent, and impactful multi-actor proposals, guiding applicants through all stages, from understanding the MAA and Horizon Europe evaluation criteria to stakeholder engagement, consortium building, and practical proposal drafting.

During 2025, CIHEAM Zaragoza made significant progress in advancing PREMIERE’s capacity-building activities supporting the MAA. Key achievements included the delivery of six skills-building webinars and the substantial development of the PREMIERE MOOC, finalising modules 1 to 4 and structuring all eight modules for launch in May 2026. The MOOC was created collaboratively across the consortium under CIHEAM Zaragoza’s coordination, using a participatory, learner-centred approach and peer review by external experts to ensure relevance and alignment with Horizon Europe requirements. Preparatory work was also carried out for four Train-the-Trainers sessions to be implemented in 2026, alongside support for macro-regional advisory panels, participation in the Innovation Fair in Brussels in October, and national workshops in Madrid in October and in Zaragoza in June.

Strengthening Farm Health and Safety Knowledge and Innovation Systems (SafeHabitus)

This Horizon Europe project (2023-2026) has a total budget of 4,732,381.25 euro. Composed of 20 partners from 13 countries, the multi-actor initiative aims to strengthen farm health and safety knowledge innovation systems and support the EU transition to social sustainability in farming. Using novel methods and a collaborative approach, the project seeks to advance safer practices on farms across the EU.

In 2025, CIHEAM Zaragoza advanced SafeHabitus through strategic policy development, stakeholder engagement, and results dissemination. The Institute drafted and presented two reports, one on migrant agricultural workers, to the European Economic and Social Committee in April and a second on mental health in farming, in the European Parliament in November. Three major events were co-organised in Brussels: a seminar on farmers' social security policies jointly with the European Committee of the Regions in March, a European Policy Dialogue Forum on occupational safety and the attractiveness of farming, also in March, and a SafeHabitus Hackathon on climate change and working conditions in October. Key contributions included coordinating National Policy Dialogues and planning for the 2026 Policy Workshops.

Institutional, Sustainable and Innovative Strengthening of Vocational Agricultural Training in Albania (INSIST-VAT)

This Erasmus+ Project (2025-2027) has a budget of 395,674.70 euro and involving 8 partners from 4 countries. The main objective of this project is to establish a continuous training offer at the Agricultural University of Tirana (UBT), bringing together and fostering collaboration among national and regional stakeholders. This initiative aims to serve as the foundation for the Albanian Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS).

The project was launched in January 2025, with the first steering committee meeting held at the Agricultural University of Tirana from 23 to 24 June. CIHEAM Zaragoza attended this meeting as well as the high-level workshop 'New challenges for agriculture - new knowledge needs' which took place on 25 June. CIHEAM Zaragoza developed the Communications and Dissemination Plan and Visual Toolkit, provided website support, the first newsletter, social media setup, a press release and video capsules produced with Kosovo partners. CIHEAM Zaragoza also contributed by screening of Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems in Spain for ACTA's European mapping.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The **International Symposium on Women's Empowerment through Innovation in Mediterranean Agro-food Systems**, held at CIHEAM Zaragoza from 10 to 12 June 2025, brought together over one hundred participants from 15 countries (mainly from the Mediterranean region) and international organisations (FAO, OECD, European Commission, EESC, ICARDA, IWMI, GWP-Med), as well as actors from civil society, the business sector and the field of innovation.

The event created an opportunity for coordinated action and revealed both the critical importance of women in Mediterranean agro-food systems and the substantial potential for gender-transformative change when appropriate resources and policies are implemented. In anticipation of the International Year of the Woman Farmer in 2026, the symposium laid a strong foundation for expanding transformative initiatives across diverse Mediterranean contexts.

The **International Symposium on New Models of Agri-Food Development Cooperation in a Changing Geopolitical Context**, held on 11-12 November 2025 at CIHEAM Zaragoza, gathered more than one hundred experts from development agencies, multilateral organisations, governments of donor and beneficiary countries, universities, research centres, Development NGOs, and civil society from 28 countries, participating either in person or on line.



Panelists following a session of the International Symposium on Women's Empowerment through Innovation in Mediterranean Agro-food Systems, held at CIHEAM Zaragoza.

The event, organised with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), demonstrated that international development cooperation, particularly in the agri-food sector, has reached a turning point marked by a financial and political structural crisis, exacerbated by declining Official Development Aid and the fragmentation of multilateralism. The symposium reaffirmed cooperation as a long-term social investment capable of restoring the citizens' trust and contributing to a more equitable and environmentally respectful society.

Alun Jones, Head of Projects at CIHEAM Zaragoza published the article 'Occupational Safety and Health in the Mediterranean Agricultural Sector', addressing the culture of occupational risk prevention in Mediterranean agriculture, highlighting the main hazards, statistics, and measures to improve the safety and health of agricultural workers.



| CIHEAM alumni during a field visit to the Shouf Biosphere Reserve (Lebanon), exploring sustainable resource management and conservation practices.

Institutional Relations

In January, CIHEAM Zaragoza welcomed Javier Rincón, **Regional Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Food of the Government of Aragón**, accompanied by José Manuel Cruz, Director General for Rural Development, and María Aitziber, Director General for Food Quality and Safety. The ministerial delegation met with staff to learn about current activities and upcoming projects.

In May, CIHEAM Zaragoza participated in the first **EuroMeSCo Consultation Circle: Consulting Southern Partners**, organised by the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) in partnership with the Policy Center for the New South (PCNS) on 13-14 May in Rabat, Morocco. The meeting formed part of the EU co-funded initiative Support to Reflection and Consultations on the Pact for the Mediterranean.

In June, CIHEAM Zaragoza's director visited **Albania**, holding strategic meetings with the Minister of Agriculture, the Spanish Ambassador, the Rector of the Agricultural University of Tirana, and alumni. This institutional mission strengthened bilateral relations and promoted academic and research cooperation in the Mediterranean agricultural sector, consolidating links with public institutions, diplomatic representations, and the alumni community to drive sustainable development in the agri-food sector.

CIHEAM Zaragoza joined the **EU Science Diplomacy Alliance** in July as a global partner. This collaborative initiative, driven by the Horizon 2020 projects S4D4C, InsSciDE and EL-CSID, develops joint research projects, policy advice and training activities in science diplomacy. The Alliance facilitates dialogue, training, institutional capacity building and funding coordination, contributing to the advancement of science diplomacy theory and practice in Europe.

In September, director Raúl Compés participated in a CIHEAM mission to **Lebanon** for a special alumni event organised by the Ministry of Agriculture and CIHEAM in Beirut. The mission featured an intensive agenda including high-level political meetings, technical visits, and the signing of a cooperation agreement. This mission reaffirmed CIHEAM Zaragoza's commitment to building stronger partnerships across the Mediterranean and supporting the next generation of professionals in creating sustainable agri-food systems.

In October, the centre welcomed Noelia Herrero Arenas, **Government Sub-delegate in Zaragoza**, who met with staff to explore the centre's ongoing work and discuss potential areas for future collaboration.

Later in the month, representatives from universities in **Kenya and Tanzania** visited CIHEAM Zaragoza within the framework of the FOSTER project, an EU co-financed initiative aimed at strengthening digital transformation in science and education in both countries. The delegation was accompanied by staff from the University of Zaragoza and the Ibercivis Foundation.

On 27 and 28 October, CIHEAM Zaragoza participated in the **National Conference on the Modernisation of Agriculture in Algiers**, contributing to a workshop on digital transformation in the agricultural sector. The conference created new opportunities for collaboration with North African institutions on agricultural digitalisation, plant breeding, animal breeding, and silvopastoral systems.

In December, Kamel Chikhi, University Professor at the **École Supérieure de Management Tlemcen in Algeria**, visited CIHEAM Zaragoza alongside Luis Miguel Albisu, former Scientific Coordinator of the CIHEAM Zaragoza International Master in Agri-Food Marketing, and Tiziana de Magistris, Research Economist at the Agri-Food Research and Technology Centre of Aragón (CITA Aragón).



1. Geopolítica Agroalimentaria

- El sector agroalimentario representa aproximadamente el 10 % del comercio mundial en valor. Pero su importancia radica en su carácter básico para garantizar la seguridad alimentaria.
- El comercio internacional de productos agroalimentarios permite interconectar los sistemas agroalimentarios excedentarios y deficitarios. "Soberanía Alimentaria" vs "Autonomía Estratégica".

| Fernando Miranda delivering the keynote lecture Agri-Food Geopolitics in the Mediterranean during the Inaugural Ceremony of the 2025-2026 Academic Year at CIHEAM Zaragoza.

Social, Scientific, and Technical Outreach

In May, the 2025 spring conference of the 'CIHEAM Zaragoza-Campus of Aula Dei Lecture Series' addressed the challenges of digitalising agri-food systems, with a special focus on the Mediterranean context. Rosa Gallardo Cobos, Director of the International Chair of Artificial Intelligence and Agriculture at the University of Cordoba in Spain, delivered a presentation on the challenges of digital transformation in promoting sustainable food systems, particularly for Mediterranean agriculture. The conference attracted 287 registered participants (141 women and 146 men) from 35 countries, with 90 attending in person.

CIHEAM Zaragoza strengthened Mediterranean partnerships through participation in September in the **EMUNI International Summer School** on Irrigation and Sustainable Oliviculture. Together with partners across the Mediterranean basin, the centre continues to build institutional alliances focused on the sustainability of olive cultivation—a sector in which CIHEAM Zaragoza maintains a long-standing track record in research and training.

Under the theme 'The Language of Food in the Mediterranean', CIHEAM Zaragoza celebrated World Food Day on 16 October, welcoming over 40 representatives of the city's business community, all members of the Zaragoza City Council's Convention Bureau.

The Inaugural Ceremony of the 2025-2026

Academic Year took place on 28 October, officially launching the 2025 master's programmes. The ceremony was presided by Javier Rincón, Regional Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Food of the Government of Aragón; Director Raúl Compés; CIHEAM Secretary General Teodoro Miano; Juan Antonio Vallés, Director of the Vice-Rectorate for Internationalisation and Cooperation at the University of Zaragoza; and Fernando Miranda, Counsellor of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for the Embassy of Spain in Rome and Permanent Representative of Spain to the FAO. The ceremony included an In Memoriam tribute to former directors Miguel Mut Catalá and Miguel Valls Ortiz, as well as the presentation of **the second Ramón Esteruelas-CIHEAM Zaragoza Prize 2023-2025**, awarded to Diego Vargas (student of the 2022-2024 edition of CIHEAM Zaragoza's International Master in Animal Genetics and Reproduction Biotechnology). The event drew 272 registered participants (124 women and 148 men) from 32 countries, with 148 in attendance (90 face-to-face and 58 online). Furthermore, in the framework of the 2025 autumn Conference of the CIHEAM Zaragoza-Campus of Aula Dei Lecture Series, Fernando Miranda delivered the **keynote lecture 'Agri-Food Geopolitics in the Mediterranean'**, in which he analysed the impact of current international conflicts on agri-food relations in the Mediterranean region.

Dissemination and outreach are essential to ensuring that the knowledge we generate reaches society, strengthens collaboration, and delivers meaningful scientific, social and technical impact.

Highlights

In 2025, CIHEAM Zaragoza's external activities attracted **1,503 participants** (58% women and 42% men) from **69 countries**.

78 master's students (4 programmes)
in their first year (academic year 2025/2026)

50 master's students with scholarships
(academic year 2025/2026)

186 participants
in 10 advanced courses (in face-to-face and online format)

918 participants
in 18 seminars and 2 symposiums

282 attendees
at 2 conferences

Participants from

69 countries
in master's programmes, advanced courses, seminars, symposia and conferences

1,503 participants and attendees
at external activities (58% women and 42% men)

13 ongoing projects
throughout 2025

High communications impact:

Over **144,000** page views

and more than **51,000** unique visitors from around the world

Strategic Alliances

2025 marks the third year of implementation of the 2023–2026 Strategic Plan, during which the Institute has continued to consolidate strategic alliances.

The relationships between CIHEAM Zaragoza and the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, remain of a special and preferential nature.

Throughout the year, the Institute has strengthened its cooperation network with national and international organisations—including the , CSIC, FAO, IOC, ICARDA, UfM, OIV, and IWMI—consolidating its role as a centre of reference in agri-food scientific and technical diplomacy.

In this context, the extension of the multi-year agreement with AECID is noteworthy. It is of particular strategic importance, as it reinforces the agri-food and rural components of its regional programme with the Arab world, Masar al'an, which aims to strengthen training and capacity-building, research, cooperation, and knowledge transfer and exchange across the strategic areas of CIHEAM Zaragoza: sustainable agri-food systems; fisheries and aquaculture; water, soils and ecosystems; forest zone management; and territorial and inclusive development, all of which are fully aligned with the objectives of the Masar al'an programme.

These actions and strategic alliances consolidate the impact of our activities and pave the way for future joint initiatives, ensuring the ongoing relevance and sustainability of our mission.



| Photo taken during the International Symposium “Women’s Empowerment through Innovation in Mediterranean Agro-food Systems”, organised by CIHEAM Zaragoza, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the CIHEAM General Secretariat, and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).

Throughout the year, the activities carried out by CIHEAM Zaragoza benefited from the collaboration of **58 partner institutions**.

Furthermore, CIHEAM Zaragoza consolidated its network by signing agreements with **16 entities**.

List of Alliances

Adnan Menderes University, Türkiye	Foundation for the Internationalisation of Public Administrations, Spain	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of Spain	Spanish Association of Large Tuna Freezers
Agrotecnio Research Center, Spain	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean	Municipality of Gagliano Aterno, Italy	Spanish Foundation for the Development of Animal Nutrition
Appia Network, Italy	Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases	National Association of Freezer Tuna Shipowners, Spain	Spanish National Research Council
Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain	Heliopolis University, Egypt	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Spain	Spanish Social Marine Institute
Basque Centre for Climate Change, Spain	Interacademic Group for Development	National Oil Office of Tunisia	State Agricultural Infrastructure Society, Spain
Basque Institute for Agricultural Research and Development, Spain	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)	Olive Grove Community Heritage Foundation, Spain	Tragsa Group, Spain
Campus Iberus Consortium, Spain (University of Zaragoza, University of Lleida, University of La Rioja and Public University of Navarre)	International Olive Council (IOC)	Olive Grove Foundation, Spain	Tlemcen University, Algeria
Casa Mediterráneo, Spain	International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation	Organisation of Frozen Tuna Producers, Spain	Turkish Society of Range and Forage Science
Center for Biological Plant Genomics, Spain	International Water Management Institute (IWMI)	Polytechnic University of Madrid, Spain	Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)
Centre for Agri-Food Research and Technology of Aragon, Spain	Italian National Research Council	Polytechnic University of Valencia, Spain	University of Alicante, Spain
Centre for Research in Agricultural Economics, Spain	Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge of Spain	Regional Government of Andalusia, Spain	University of Cordoba, Spain
Environmental Defense Fund	Ministry of Agriculture of Algeria	Science and Research Centre Koper, Slovenia	University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain
Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI)	Ministry of Agriculture of Lebanon	School of Shepherds of Catalonia, Spain	University of Lleida, Spain
European Association of Wine Economists		Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)	University of Zaragoza, Spain
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)		Spanish Association for Animal Production	Valencian Institute for Agricultural Research, Spain.

List of Agreements

Agricultural University of Tirana, Albania	International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	Pablo Serrano Secondary Education Institute, Spain
Centre for Agri-Food Research and Technology of Aragon, Spain	Knowledge System Consultancy and Research Company, Rashidoun	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)
Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI)	Lebanese University, Lebanon	Spanish National Association of Plant Breeders (ANOVE)
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights of Malta	Spanish Social Marine Institute (ISM)
IMDEA Water Foundation, Spain	National Institute of Agricultural and Food Research and Technology, Spain	Spanish Society of Horticultural Sciences (SECH)
International Olive Council (IOC)		

The Team



Maite Aguinaco has been administrator of Environment and Natural Resources in the Training Unit since 1990. She is a biologist and former student of the Master in Rural Planning. During her thirty years of service, Maite has played an active part in pioneering postgraduate environmental studies at the Institute. She was a founding member and secretary of the Spanish Association of Terrestrial Ecology (AEET).



Raquel Álvarez has been a project manager since she joined the staff in September 2025. She holds a PhD in Plant Biotechnology, with doctoral research focused on floral development, bioinformatics and omics techniques, complemented by postgraduate training and professional experience in scientific communication. Raquel is committed to innovation in agri-food systems, gender equality, and social inclusion. She has over ten years of volunteer experience with Special Olympics and ACELL and has contributed to scientific outreach through the Pint of Science and 11 February initiatives.



Mario Anamaría has been administrator of Marketing and Agri-food Systems in the Training Unit since 1991. He is an economist with three years of doctoral studies in economics, with previous experience of 2 years in the indexed loans division in private banking. Mario is deeply concerned about social issues such as poverty and food insecurity. He is an avid photographer, film enthusiast, reader and traveller and a former member of the Royal Photographic Society of Zaragoza and the Artymagen Cultural Society of Zaragoza.



Daniela Andreica has been an administrative management assistant in the Training Unit since 2024. She has a degree in Economic and Social Administration and a master's degree in Applied Social Sciences for Consultancy, Research, and Intervention, specialising in Sociology and Economics of Change. She holds a PhD in Gender Relations and Feminist Studies, with doctoral research focusing on the social integration of female migrants in Spain. Daniela's passion for music has brought a personal touch to academic and social events at CIHEAM Zaragoza.



Susana Artieda is an administrative management assistant and interpreter in the Training Unit. Susana joined CIHEAM Zaragoza 21 years ago and her professional journey has included library management and administrative support to projects. She holds a degree in English and a postgraduate diploma in Translation and Interpreting. She has lived and worked in Ireland as an in-house translator and has also worked as an associate lecturer in Technical English at the University of Zaragoza.



Joaquín Balduque is administrator of Plant Production, Health and Breeding in the Training Unit. Joaquín joined the Institute in January 2023. He is an agronomist, with more than 20 years of experience working for private companies and official institutions and is currently completing his PhD in New Methodologies for Predictive Models of Grapevine Pests.



Bernardo Basurco has been administrator of Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Training Unit since 1995. Bernardo has a PhD in Veterinary Science. His research experience includes two postdoctoral stays at UC Davis and INRA Jouy-en-Josas, and a research contract at INIA Madrid. He has served on the Board of the European Aquaculture Society and has been president of the Spanish Aquaculture Society. He also has an impressive collection of banknotes and coins featuring aquatic animals and fishing scenes.



Ramzi Belkhodja is Head of the Training Unit. Ramzi has more than 28 years of service at the Institute, where he previously coordinated the Plant Production, Health and Breeding Area. He holds a master's degree in Plant Breeding and a PhD in Crop Science. His professional interests focus on advanced training in plant production and breeding, human capital development, sustainability, resilience, and innovation, and has a strong track record in scientific publications, academic examining boards, and teaching in CIHEAM master's programmes.



Jorge Blasco is an IT and Digitalisation Specialist and has been a member of the IT & Digitalisation Unit since 2017. Jorge is qualified in software development, web development and microcomputer systems and networks, and specialises in Odoo, software/web development and audiovisual support for training events.



José Manuel Calvera is Head of the IT and Digitalisation Unit. José Manuel joined CIHEAM Zaragoza in June 1984 as a member of the Publications Department and has spent his entire career at the Institute. Over the years, he has specialised primarily in information technology and data protection.



Roberto Carrera is a communication and marketing specialist, joining the Communication, Marketing & Documentation Unit in September 2025. Roberto has a background in multimedia communication, journalism, and communication for development, with professional experience across the private sector, media, and international organisations. His interests include institutional communication, branding, the use of emerging technologies, and a long-standing musical project that remains proudly unfinished.



Raúl Compés has been director of CIHEAM Zaragoza since 2021. Raúl has a PhD in Agricultural Engineering from the Polytechnic University of Valencia (UPV) where he is a lecturer in the Department of Economics and Social Science, currently on special secondment. He is an expert in economics and food systems policy, with a special interest in the wine sector. He is also a member of the Aragonese Academy of Gastronomy and vice-president of the European Association of Wine Economists and has participated in the edition of four OIV-award-winning books on wine.



Teresa Esteban is Head of Economic Management, HR, Maintenance and Logistics. Teresa joined the staff in 2011. She has a degree in Law and Business Administration and previous professional experience in a law firm. As a nature enthusiast, working at an international centre dedicated to environmental sustainability and agronomy allows her to align her personal passions with a global mission to protect the planet.



Irene Gavieiro is a project manager since she joined the staff in April 2025. Irene has a degree in Journalism and a master's degree in Development and International Cooperation, with over seven years of professional experience in international cooperation and humanitarian response, and a current professional focus on European research projects. She has previously worked with various United Nations agencies and international organisations in Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Timor-Leste, Spain and Portugal. She is passionate about diversity, gender equity and rural development, combining development expertise with communications and project management skills to drive impact.



Laura Gil is a communication and marketing specialist, and joined the Communication, Marketing and Documentation Unit in September 2022. Laura graduated in Journalism from the Universidad de Navarra and has over 20 years of experience in corporate communication, marketing, and media in Spain, the United States, and France. She specialised in science journalism at the Spanish National Research Council and the Agencia EFE and has developed science-based campaigns for medical societies and top global companies in animal and human health. Laura's current professional interests focus on cooperation and science diplomacy.



Beatriz Gómez has been an administrative assistant in the Projects Unit since 2021. Beatriz has a university degree in English Studies. She has worked as an administrative assistant in the financial, legal, public, healthcare, and education sectors. Her interests include education, the environment, and economic and social development.



Clara Guelbenzu is Head of the Communication, Marketing and Documentation Unit. Clara joined CIHEAM Zaragoza in 1991. She has a BA in English language and literature and a master's in human resources. Clara's 30-year professional journey has focused on interpreting, communication, publications management and editing. She has also been CIHEAM's gender equity and women's empowerment focal point in Zaragoza since 2019. She runs the award-winning blog 'bootheando' and is committed to social impact through pro-bono communication work for mental health organisations.



Alun Jones has been Head of the Projects Unit since 2017. Alun has a master's in EU Law. Previously, he held the following roles: Head of Press at the European Economic and Social Committee, Chief of Communications and Advocacy at the UN Agency on Drugs and Crime, Deputy Head of Press at EFSA and Project Manager at the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. He is experienced in project management, advocacy, policy development and communications and has specialised more recently in the following technical areas; pesticides, decent work and social conditions, gender, tourism, multi-actor skills and agri-green policies.



Antonio López-Francos has been administrator of cooperative projects and networks in the Projects Unit since 2003. Antonio is an agronomist with postgraduate studies in rural development and has been responsible for the Institute's Options Méditerranéennes and editor of numerous issues. Previous to his work at CIHEAM Zaragoza he worked overseas in Morocco and in Peru. He has practical experience in farming and a broad view on agricultural systems and rural development across the Mediterranean region.



Javier Ormaechea has been the maintenance technician in the Economic Management, HR, Maintenance & Logistics Unit since 1994. He has a vocational training qualification in electrical systems. Javier is responsible for the maintenance and smooth-running of the Institute's facilities, overseeing works and liaising with contractors, while also supporting training events as audiovisual technician.



Andrea Pascuales has been the travel and administration officer in the Economic Management, HR, Maintenance & Logistics Unit since she joined the staff in 2024. Andrea has a degree in International Relations and a master's in International Development, with previous professional experience in operations, executive assistance, and administrative coordination, including travel logistics and institutional support. Her professional interests focus on cross-cultural communication, international cooperation, and organisational support in multicultural settings.



Andrés Schlageter has been Administrator of Animal Production and Welfare in the Training Unit since 2020. Andrés is a veterinarian with a PhD in Animal Science. He has wide experience working as a veterinarian, researcher and project coordinator in South America, Europe and the US. He combines his role as coordinator of training activities with research and cooperation project and contributes to networking activities in matters related to livestock production in the Mediterranean region.



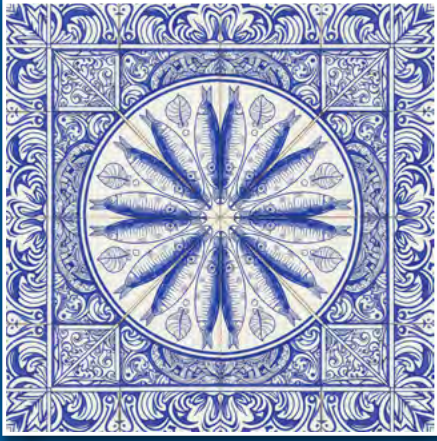
Emna Sferi has been the executive assistant since 2022. She has a degree in Agricultural Engineering and a master's degree in Rural Planning. As a former student of CIHEAM Zaragoza's master's programme, Emna is no stranger to the Institute and its institutional culture. This background allows her to understand the needs of students, lecturers and staff members alike, to whom she provides guidance and administrative and organisational assistance.



Marie-Louise Tall is an interpreter, translator and documentalist in the Communication, Marketing and Documentation Unit. Marie-Louise joined CIHEAM Zaragoza's interpretation team 36 years ago with a degree in Hispanic Studies and a passion for the written and spoken word. Over her career, she has developed comprehensive expertise across interpreting, translation, editing, and proofreading, and has led numerous translation and editorial projects. Marie-Louise is now applying her expertise to the next challenge of leading the digitalisation of the Documentation Centre.



Pilar Tienda is technical assistant in the Economic Management, HR, Maintenance & Logistics Unit. Pilar has a vocational training diploma in Business Information Systems. She was recruited in 1991 during the early years of project management at CIHEAM Zaragoza. She enjoys working in close interaction with lecturers and students in an international, multicultural organisation, an enriching experience that has allowed her, in addition to acquiring knowledge, to cultivate meaningful relationships and lasting friendships.



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