



Transitioning to more sustainable aquatic food value chains

Zaragoza (Spain) • 3-7 November 2025



CIHEAM
ZARAGOZA



Objectives

The contribution of food systems, particularly aquatic food value chains, to economic growth and the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals is steadily increasing. Globalisation, market complexity and trends, consumer preferences, and international concerns about the sustainability of natural resources, require improved knowledge about how aquatic food value chains operate and their potential to become more sustainable.

Aquatic food value chains, derived from industrial and small-scale fisheries and aquaculture, play a crucial role in global food security and livelihoods, especially in Mediterranean and African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries. However, challenges such as post-harvest losses, market access, environmental concerns, and unequal benefit distribution threaten their sustainability.

Based on recent experiences, such as FAO's FISH4ACP programme, this course adopts a comprehensive approach to better understand aquatic food value chain components, and identifies pathways for transitioning to more sustainable systems that incorporate economic viability, social inclusion, and environmental responsibility.

The course offers stakeholders a practical analytical framework and methodologies to analyse, design, and implement interventions aimed at enhancing sustainability across the aquatic food value chain.

By the end of the course, participants will:

- understood the sustainability challenges of aquatic food value chains;
- analysed functions of sustainable aquatic food value chains through mapping;

- evaluated market trends, requirements and access conditions;
- applied stakeholder analysis and explored enabling environments;
- identified pathways to enhance market access and value addition while minimising environmental and social impacts;
- explored inclusive, circular and equitable value chain models;
- learnt about governance mechanisms and how to develop strategies for sustainable aquatic food value chains.

Organisation

The course is organised by the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), through the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Zaragoza (CIHEAM Zaragoza), in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), through the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division.

The course will be held at CIHEAM Zaragoza (Spain) over a period of one week, from 3 to 7 November 2025, in morning and afternoon sessions. It will also be held on line through live sessions transmitted from CIHEAM Zaragoza. There are two participation options: a) face-to-face with access to lectures, case studies and practical work or b) online with access to lectures and case studies via live streaming. The programme will be delivered by well qualified lecturers from international organisations, research centres, universities, and administration services in different countries.

The course requires individual work and interaction between participants and with lecturers. The international characteristics of the course favour the exchange of experiences and points of view. The course blends theoretical learning with case studies and group work. During practical sessions participants will work on mapping and analysing the value chain, conducting a stakeholder analysis, and developing governance and strategies for upgrading sustainable value chains.

Programme

1. Opening (welcome and introduction of participants) (1 hour)
2. Introduction to aquatic food value chains (3 hours)
 - 2.1. Role of aquatic food systems within food systems in general
 - 2.2. What we mean by sustainable aquatic value chains
 - 2.2.1. The concept of value chains (national, regional and global)
 - 2.2.2. Understanding sustainability (opportunities and challenges)
 - 2.2.3. Aquatic food value chain actors and their roles
 - 2.2.4. Product, information, and financial flows in the chain (value chain mapping)
 - 2.3. Participants' presentations about their own country's value chains
3. Functional analysis and mapping of sustainable aquatic food value chains (6 hours)
 - 3.1. Input-output and linkage analysis
 - 3.2. Impact factors and spillover effects of the demand for fish
 - 3.3. Price formation and transmission along the chain
 - 3.4. Value Chain Analysis methodologies
 - 3.4.1. Fish4ACP, FAO
 - 3.4.2. VCA4D, European Commission
 - 3.5. Group work on VCA serious game or mapping and analysis of participants' own value chains (2 hours)
4. Market access and trade for sustainability (6 hours)
 - 4.1. Equity aspects and food security
 - 4.2. Market trends and consumer preferences
 - 4.3. Sustainability, certifications and labels: opportunities and challenges
 - 4.4. Traceability, transparency and regulatory compliance
 - 4.5. Local networks and community-supported fisheries
5. Stakeholders and enabling environment (5 hours)
 - 5.1. Stakeholder analysis (FAO sustainable food value chain framework)
 - 5.1.1. Role of producer's organisations
 - 5.1.2. Support institutions and services (infrastructure, fish landing, logistics, energy, R&D, education, fish safety laboratories, export promotions, information, etc.)
 - 5.2. Policy and regulatory frameworks supporting sustainable value chains
 - 5.3. Collaborative governance and public-private partnerships
 - 5.4. Financing and investment mechanisms for sustainability
 - 5.5. Case study. Producer's organisations (Spain)
 - 5.6. Group work on stakeholder analysis of aquatic food value chains
6. Pathways for more sustainable aquatic food value chains (6 hours)
 - 6.1. Value addition and efficient resource use
 - 6.2. By-product utilisation, and reduction of food loss and waste (FAO FLW)
 - 6.3. The contribution of technology (digital platforms; blockchains; AI) and innovation to sustainability
 - 6.4. Sustainable business models (circular, doughnut, cooperative)
 - 6.5. Building inclusive and equitable value chains (gender equity, indigenous knowledge, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and smallholder participation in seafood value chains)
7. Governance and strategies for sustainable aquatic food value chains (5 hours)
 - 7.1. Assessing economic, social and environmental impacts and SWOT of existing value chains
 - 7.2. Strategic planning for value chain improvement
 - 7.3. Governance mechanisms for strategy formulation and implementation
 - 7.4. Impact measurement and monitoring of interventions
 - 7.5. Group work on upgrading sustainable value chains
8. Final discussion and conclusions (1 hour)

Guest lecturers

Avadí, Angel - CIRAD, Montpellier (France)
De Las Peñas Rivero, Francisco Javier - MAPA-SGP, Madrid (Spain)
Fernández Polanco, José M. - Univ. Cantabria, Santander (Spain)
Guillotreau, Patrice - IRD, Sète (France)
Ichibane, Mohammed - FAO, Rome (Italy)
Kelling, Ingrid - Heriot-Watt University (United Kingdom)
Lem, Audun - FAO, Rome (Italy)
Peñarubia, Omar Riego - FAO, Rome (Italy)
Romuld, Bree - FAO, Rome (Italy)

Admission

The course is designed for professionals with a university degree, and is directed at policy makers, market analysts, value chain actors, technical specialists and researchers involved in aquatic food chains and their transition to sustainability.

- 25 places will be available for face-to-face participation (32 hours, lectures, case study, and practical work).
- 25 places will be available for online participation (26 hours, lectures and case study).

English will be the working language of the course.

Registration

- Candidates may apply online at the following address: <https://admission.iamz.ciheam.org/en/>
- Applications must include a curriculum vitae and a copy of the supporting documents most related to the course subject.
- The deadline for the submission of applications is 22 June 2025. The deadline may be extended for candidates not applying for a scholarship if there are free places available.
- Registration fees for the course amount to 500 euro for face-to-face participation and 350 euro for online participation. This sum covers tuition fees only.

Scholarships

Candidates from the FAO and CIHEAM member countries (Albania, Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Türkiye) may apply for scholarships covering registration fees, and for scholarships covering the cost of travel and full board accommodation in Zaragoza.

Preference will be given to candidates from low-and medium-income countries. Candidates that wish to request financial support should complete the relevant section when making their online application to participate in the course.

Candidates from other countries who require financial support should apply directly to other national or international institution.

Insurance

It is compulsory for participants attending the course in person to have medical insurance valid for Spain. Proof of insurance cover must be given at the beginning of the course. Those who so wish may participate in a collective insurance policy taken out by the Organisation, upon payment of the stipulated sum.

In collaboration with:



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Contact:

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<https://www.iamz.ciheam.org/education/advanced-courses/>

