

Sustainable Food chain management strategies for the preserved fish sector.

ERASMUS+ Blended Intensive Programme call for applications



Venue	University of Parma
Pre-recorded Lessons	20 - 24 July 2026
In presence	27 - 31 July 2026
language	English
ETCS	6
Deadline for applying	30 May 2026

INDEX

Sustainability of GI Supply Chains in Mediterranean countries: theories and tools	1
ERASMUS+ Blended Intensive Programme call for applications.....	1
Total number of participants per institution:	3
BIP calendar (both virtual and physical periods).....	3
ECTS credits (with credit equivalents for non-ECTS partners).....	3
Teaching methodologies.....	3
Venue for the physical period of attendance.....	3
The call for applicants.....	4
Description of the program	4
Motivation at the basis of the BIP	4
Program learning objectives.....	4
Language of teaching	4
Program content, detailing physical and virtual components.....	5
Physical module.....	5
Module on “Quality Food Value Chains Management” (4 + 4 hours)	5
Module on “Sustainable Value Chain Management” (2 + 2 hours).....	5
Module on “Logistics Management for a Better Competitiveness” (2 + 2 hours).....	5
Module on “The Sustainable Quality Circle” (4 + 4 hours).....	5
Module on “Market Strategies to Improve Competitiveness in the European Market” (2 +2 hours)	5
Virtual period.....	6
Introduction module (6 hours)	6
Eligibility and participation criteria	6
How to apply.....	7
Selection criteria and procedures	7
Financial support.....	7
Available services at University of Parma (in-presence period).....	8

The University of Parma (Italy), jointly with the University College Dublin, UCD (Ireland), and the University of Zagreb (Croatia) offer the opportunity to participate in an ERASMUS+ Blended Intensive Program (BIPs). The Blended Intensive Program is officially approved by the EU in the framework of the ERASMUS+ 2021/2027.

BIPs are among the innovative student mobility formats introduced by the new Erasmus+ 2021-2027 Program. These programs, jointly developed by multiple higher education institutions, feature advanced, innovative pedagogical approaches that combine short-term face-to-face (in-person) mobility with virtual learning components.

BIPs are inherently transnational and transdisciplinary, as their curricula are developed and taught jointly by partner institutions across different countries. The combination of in-person and virtual learning spaces enables students and professors to engage in and exchange highly collaborative, challenge-based, and research-steeped methods of teaching and learning.

Through the required virtual part of the program, students and professors alike have the opportunity to develop and hone their digital knowledge and skills, reflecting the European Commission's priority to harness the potential of digital technologies for teaching and learning and to develop digital skills for all.

Total number of participants per institution:

The Blended Intensive Program is open to a limited number of participants from each partner institution, and to an overall number of students. **The number of participants agreed is 15 (5 for each university).**

BIP calendar (both virtual and physical periods)

The virtual program runs from July 20 to July 24, 2026 and it consists of pre-recorded lessons. The physical program runs from July 27 to July 31, 2026.

The BIP calendar consists of 2 phases:

- A virtual programme, starting on July 20 2026, and consisting of pre-recorded lessons.
- A physical programme, starting on July 27 and ending on July 31, 2026.

ECTS credits (with credit equivalents for non-ECTS partners)

The successful completion of the program, both in its physical and virtual parts, awards **6 ECTS**.

Teaching methodologies

Face-to-face lectures, on-field class, case-studies presentations, self-learning, and online group meetings for data analysis and discussion.

Venue for the physical period of attendance

The physical part of the BIP will take place at the Department of Economic and Management Science at the University of Parma. The address is as follows:

Dipartimento di Scienze Economiche e Aziendali - [Via J.F. Kennedy, n. 6 a Parma, 43123, Parma](#)

The call for applicants

Description of the program

The Project aims to address food chain management in the preserved fishing sector, with a focus on competitiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

By attending this BIP program, students will have the opportunity to exchange experiences and knowledge while facing real problems and strategic objectives of a leading company in the preserved fish sector based in Parma. In a few modules, students will be guided through a knowledge-to-action path, where they will learn how to address the complexity of the issues related to the management of Food Value Chains (FVC) and solve real problems related to topics that can generate trade-off in value chain managements: i) the firm competitiveness, by improving market sharing; ii) the firm competitiveness, by controlling costs at the several level of the food chain; iii) the sustainability of the food process, by considering the social, environmental and economic dimension of the sustainability.

The BIP, considering a real case study, will face specific critical aspects related to procurement strategies, cost control, market sales, the sustainability of the FVC, logistics management, and marketing strategies. The aim is to manage real problems and manage conflicts that often arise from them, thereby improving education, awareness-raising, and human, professional and institutional efforts. Students will actively participate in work groups in the data analysis and problem-solving activities.

The course will be organised into modules, guiding students along a knowledge-to-action path as they learn to address the complexity of issues related to the management of Food Value Chains (FVC) and solve real problems.

- Module on "Quality Food Value Chains management"
- Module on "Sustainable Value Chain management"
- Module on "Cost management and sustainable issues."
- Module on "Logistics management for a better competitiveness."
- Module on "Market strategies to improve competitiveness in the European market"

The aim of the project is thus to provide practical and theoretical elements that enrich students' skills in the field, taking into account the specific environmental and social characteristics, conditions and critical issues present in European areas.

The BIP will be developed in collaboration with the University of Parma and the Universities of UCD and Zagreb. These Countries (Emilia Romagna, Ireland, and Croatia) are competing in the market with high-quality seafood products. The three universities will contribute by bringing knowledge from years of research in the world of firm management sustainability.

Two study visits are planned: to the food company that supports the BIP and to other local SMEs in the province of Parma and the Emilia-Romagna region.

Motivation at the basis of the BIP

The BIP is born with the idea of sharing competences and skills present in the Universities that participate in this initiative and share them with students coming from four different regions in Europe, so that they will take home and possibly adapt to their reality what they will learn in Parma.

Program learning objectives

By attending this BIP program, students and teaching staff will have the opportunity to exchange experiences and knowledge. In all four modules, students will be guided by teachers through a knowledge-to-action path, where they will learn how to address the complexity of the above issues and the conflicts that often arise from them, thereby improving education, awareness-raising, and human, professional, and institutional efforts. In addition, they will actively participate in work groups for field sample collection and data analysis, which will produce an essay, and, after the week in Parma, they will also have to collaborate through online meetings.

Language of teaching

All the modules and courses are taught in ENGLISH language (B1 minimum level required).

Program content, detailing physical and virtual components

Physical module

The program will consist of **40 hours** in physical presence at the University of Parma (Department of Economic and Management), of 16 hours of lectures, 16 hours of practice and two 2 field trips (4+4 hours) in which they will take classes with scholars, meet the management of one leading company in preserved fish and an iconic SME of Parma and will elaborate essays related to new challenging strategies related to this company. The content is the following:

Module on “Quality Food Value Chains Management” (4 + 4 hours)

This module focuses on the organisation and coordination of agri-food value chains with the objective of ensuring and enhancing product quality. Students will explore how governance structures, standards, and stakeholder interactions influence quality along the chain. Particular attention will be given to traceability systems, certification schemes, and coordination mechanisms. Through case studies, students will assess strategies to maintain consistent quality while improving overall chain performance.

Module on “Sustainable Value Chain Management” (4 + 4 hours)

The module addresses the integration of environmental, social, and economic sustainability principles into agri-food value chains. Students will analyse tools and frameworks for assessing sustainability performance, including Life Cycle Assessment and multi-criteria approaches. Emphasis will be placed on stakeholder engagement and governance for sustainability transitions. Practical examples will help students understand trade-offs and synergies in sustainable value chain design.

Module on “Cost Management and Sustainable Issues” (2 + 2 hours)

This module examines the relationship between cost structures and sustainability objectives within agri-food systems. Students will learn how to identify, measure, and manage production and transaction costs while incorporating environmental and social externalities. The course will introduce methods for cost-benefit analysis and sustainability-oriented accounting approaches. Case studies will illustrate how firms balance economic efficiency with sustainability commitments.

Module on “Logistics Management for a Better Competitiveness” (2 + 2 hours)

The module explores logistics strategies that enhance efficiency and competitiveness in agri-food supply chains. Students will study distribution systems, inventory management, and transportation optimisation, with a focus on perishable products. Special attention will be given to short supply chains and their role in local development. Through practical applications, students will evaluate how logistics innovations can reduce costs, waste, and environmental impacts.

Module on “Market Strategies to Improve Competitiveness in the European Market” (4 + 4 hours)

This module analyses market dynamics and strategic approaches for positioning agri-food products within the European context. Students will examine consumer behaviour, market segmentation, branding, and differentiation strategies, including the role of quality schemes such as GIs. Regulatory frameworks and trade policies shaping the EU market will also be discussed. Case studies will enable students to design strategies to enhance competitiveness and market access

Virtual period

The programme consists of 6 hours of pre-recorded short lessons that will be made available for all the participants by July 20th.

Introduction and conclusion module (6 + 2 hours)

The module aims to familiarise participants with the agri-food system of canned fish products, with particular reference to species such as sardines and mackerel, which are widely consumed across different European regions. In this respect, classes (sub-divided into three lessons of two hours) will delve into three main topics: i) the regulatory and quality framework governing canned fish products in the European Union, including sustainability, traceability, and labelling issues; ii) the production and value chain organisation in Ireland, with a focus on mackerel fisheries and export-oriented processing systems; iii) the production model in Croatia and Italy, highlighting the role of small-scale fisheries, traditional processing, and territorial specialisation in sardine-based products. These contexts represent diverse models within the European canned fish sector, combining industrial efficiency with local traditions and sustainability challenges. A final online lesson (2 hours) will be provided to summarise the main insights and facilitate a general discussion on sustainability, market dynamics, and future perspectives of the canned fish sector.

Eligibility and participation criteria

To apply for this program, students must be regularly enrolled at one of the participating universities. Applicants must be enrolled in a Master's or PhD level degree.

At the time of the application submission, applicants must demonstrate proof of minimum English language competence at the B1 level (CEFR). This can be certified by the University of origin (see application procedures below). Level B2 will be a preferential criterion.

Participation to the program is open to students of the following disciplines and/or degree programmes:

- **University of Parma**
Economia e Management dei Sistemi Alimentari Sostenibili (EMSAS), Economics and Management of Sustainable Food System
- **University College Dublin**
- **University of Zagreb**

Selected students must communicate their acceptance or withdrawal within 10 days of the publication of the selection results by contacting their university program coordinator (see below).

Selected students will be contacted with further instructions upon completion of the selection procedures.

How to apply

Students interested in participating should fill out the [application form](#) by **May 30th 2026**.

The application form must contain the following attachments:

- Copy of valid ID or passport;
- Transcript of Records (A certificate of enrolment at the home University with a list of passed exams and grades);
- Language certificate (If not already present as an exam in the Transcript of Records);
- Motivation letter (containing, if applicable, previous experiences abroad);
- Other documents and certificates (optional).

Selection criteria and procedures

An appointed Committee will carry out the selection procedures. Selection is based on the following criteria:

- Academic performance

- Personal Motivation
- English language competence
- Evaluation of further qualifications and skills
- Previous participation to other BIPs

Students can expect to hear back about the outcome of their application by **June 5th 2026**. Selected students must communicate their acceptance or withdrawal within 10 days from the publication of the selection results by contacting their university program coordinator. Selected students will be contacted with further instructions upon completion of the selection procedures.

Evaluation Commission

The assessment panel consists of the following professors:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| - Prof. Filippo Arfini | Full professor | President |
| - Maria Cecilia Mancini | Full Professor | Member |
| - Mario Veneziani | Associate professor | Secretariat |
| - Rosalia Filippini | Researcher Tenure Track | Substitute |

Financial support

As a part of the ERASMUS+ Program, financial support may be guaranteed by the selected student's home University. Each partner university is responsible for managing the economic aspects of mobility in accordance with the provisions of the competent ERASMUS+ National Agency.

No financial support is available for students from the University hosting the physical part of the Programme (**University of Parma**), as they will not be travelling for purposes of participation in this program (non-mobility participants).

Available services at University of Parma (in-presence period)

Services available to students during the in-person part of the program (examples might include):

- Administrative Support
- Accommodation Support
- Social events
- University services (Wi-Fi, library access, lab access, etc.)
- Visa Support, if needed

University of Parma (Coordinator)

[Prof. Filippo Arfini](#)

Prof. Mario Veneziani

University of Zagreb

Prof. Kristina Petljak

[Prof. Štulec Ivana](#)

Contacts

University College Dublin

Prof. Brian Leonard Prof.

Prof Edel Kelly