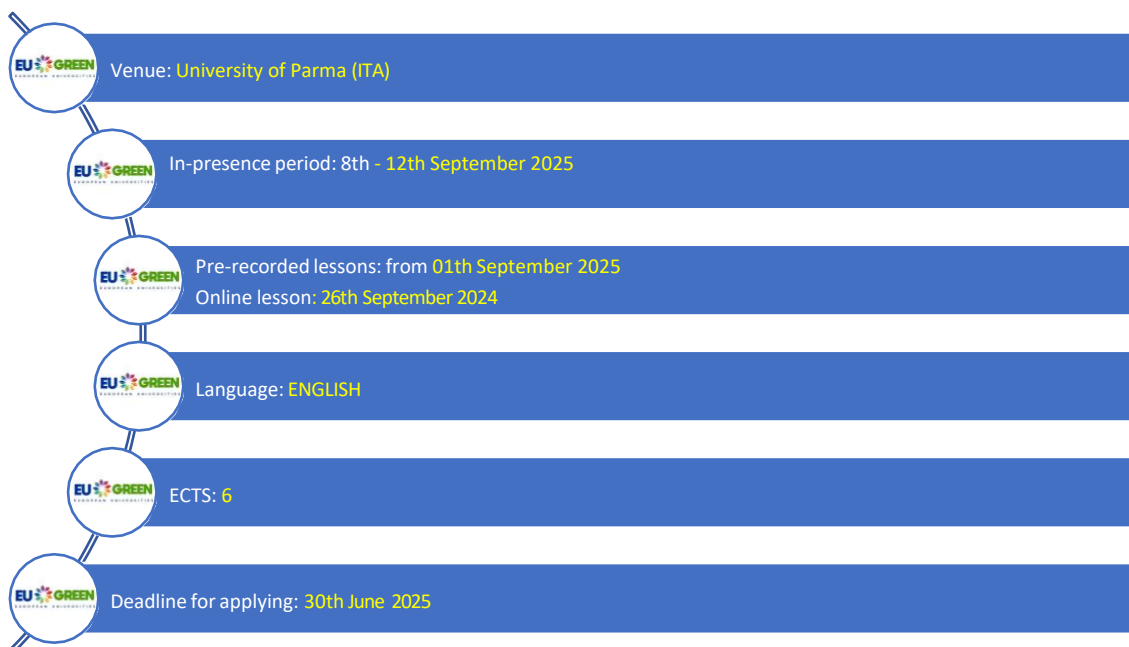


Sustainability of GI Supply Chains in Mediterranean countries: theories and tools

ERASMUS+ Blended Intensive Programme call for applications

Contract n.: 2024-1-IT02-KA131-HED-000209672

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The University of Parma (Italy), jointly with the University of Extremadura (Spain), and Evora (Portugal) offer the EU GREEN students the opportunity to participate in a. ERASMUS+ Blended Intensive Program (BIPs). The Blended Intensive Program is officially approved by the EU in the framework of the ERASMUS+ 2021/2027 and is developed in the framework of the EU GREEN Network.

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

BIPs are inherently transnational and transdisciplinary, as curricula are developed and taught together by partner institutions in different countries. The combination of in-person and virtual learning spaces allows students and professors to experience 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 EU GREEN partner institution, and to an overall number of students. The number of participants agreed is **30**.

BIP calendar (both virtual and physical periods)

Physical program starts on **September 8th** and ends on **September 12th, 2025**. The Virtual program is divided in two parts, the first one starts on the **01th of September 2025**, and it consists of **pre-recorded lessons**, the second one is the online final lesson which will be held on **26th September 2025**.

The BIP calendar consists of 3 phases:

- A virtual programme, starting on **September 1th 2025**, and consisting of pre-recorded lessons.
- A physical programme, starting on **September 8th** and ending on **September 26th 2025**.
- An online final lesson will be held on **September 26th**.

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 the issue of sustainability in food systems related to Geographical Indications. Though the topic of sustainability is widely discussed in many graduate courses, it must be considered innovative in light of the new European Regulation 2023/1143, which introduces the possibility for Producer Groups to agree on sustainable practices (Art.7) and to prepare and regularly update a sustainability report based on verifiable information (art.8). The Regulation introduces specific sustainability criteria because it is believed that geographical indications can play an essential role in terms of sustainability, including in the area of the circular economy, increasing their value as cultural heritage and thus strengthening their role in the framework of national and regional policies to achieve the objectives of the European Green Deal.

In this area, producer groups must make decisions that can impact the entire value chain. At the same time, the role of Producer Groups is strengthened, introducing greater powers and responsibilities. The Producers Group will also have the opportunity to explain their commitment to economic, environmental, and social sustainability by including the sustainable practices adopted in the product specification or in a sustainability report, which will accompany the GI product specification and be published on an EU portal.

The aim of the project is thus to provide practical theoretical elements that enrich students' skills in the field, taking into account the specific environmental and social characteristics, conditions and critical issues present in Mediterranean areas. In these regions, the management of natural resources that give the character of uniqueness to GIs productions is particularly complex, creating a condition of uncertainty on the entire production system.

In this context, the issue of measuring and communicating the sustainability of this production system is also addressed, with important institutions such as the FAO and Origin-GI proposing a specific methodology.

The project will be developed in collaboration with the University of Parma, as well as the Universities of Évora and Extremadura. These regions (Emilia Romagna, Extremadura and Alentejo) are home to some of the most iconic typical productions from the GIs landscape of the Mediterranean area. The three universities will contribute by bringing knowledge from years of research in the world of GIs and sustainability.

During the 5-day Course, the topics that will be covered will include: i) The concept of typicality and quality in local productions; ii) The value chain and local food systems in typical productions; iii) The code of specifications in GI productions; iv) The Quality Circle of Sustainable; and v) The FAO GUIDE for the evaluation of sustainable GIs. Each theoretical topic will be followed by an exercise time. Two study visits to the reality of the GI System in the province of Parma and the Emilia-Romagna region are planned.

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 in a field sample collection, in the data analysis, and, after the week in Parma, they will also have to collaborate through on-line 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 trip (4+4 hours) in which they will meet GI Groups Manager and GIS, Producers and collect data, and a follow-up, on-line, in which the students divided in groups will have work on data elaboration. The content is the following:

Module on “Typicity and Geographical Indications” (4 + 4 hours)

The module addresses the concept of typicality, which is the basis for products designated as Geographical Indications. In this context, not all typical products can be considered Geographical Indications. There are social, legal, and strategic aspects that lead to the correct classification of these types of products. Understanding what a GI is and the advantages and disadvantages of obtaining this recognition enables the development of a proper strategy for protecting the product, the natural resources that contribute to its creation, and its promotion. In this module, students will understand the meaning of typical products and Geographical Indications, in their PDO and PGI senses, from a legal and strategic perspective. Students will analyse and discuss practical cases that allow for the evaluation of strategies to assess which legal form is most useful. Teachers will guide students through a knowledge-to-action path, where they will learn how to address the complexity of the above issues and the conflicts they often produce, thereby improving education, awareness-raising, and human, professional, and institutional efforts.

Module on “GI Value Chains” (2 + 2 hours)

GI products, like all food products, are characterised by specific value chains. Unlike generic products, however, they are subject to constraints dictated by the Code of Specification and by the characteristics and objectives of the agents that comprise the value chain upstream and downstream of the product's production. Students will analyse the meaning of Local Agri-Food System (LAFS) in terms of both resource management and its contribution to quality characterisation and commercial enhancement.

Module on “Code of Specification definition” (2 + 2 hours)

The role of the Code of Specification for GI products is crucial, as it sets out in writing the rules that define their quality. To this must be added the definition of the relationship with the natural resources used in the production process and the social implications that derive from it, due to the potential effect of discrimination that may result. Students will learn how to develop production regulations that minimise the discriminatory impact and mitigate conflicts between supply chain agents and local stakeholders.

Module on “The Sustainable Quality Circle” (4 + 4 hours)

The module aims to illustrate the content of the FAO publication “[Linking People, Place and Products](#),” which enables the sustainable management of sustainability and quality in GI production systems. Although the guide was published in 2010, it remains original in its approach to systematising the elements that must be managed to maintain product quality over time without compromising the sustainability characteristics that underpin GIs.

Module on “FAO GUIDE for Assess Sustainable GIs” (2 +2 hours)

The module aims to illustrate and understand the use of the FAO-OriGIn Guide “[Developing a roadmap towards increased sustainability in geographical indications](#).” The guide aims to help GI Groups and industry professionals understand the aspects that support and characterise the sustainability of their products. The goal is to develop a roadmap to assess the evolution of the GI system in terms of sustainability through a participatory and inclusive process involving stakeholders in the local food system at the base of the GI. Students will become familiar with the Guide by practising on concrete cases..

Virtual period

The programme consists of 6 hours of pre-recorded short lessons that will be made available for all the participants by the September 1st.

Introduction and conclusion module (6 + 2 hours)

The module aims to familiarise participants with the holistic approach of the European Union (EU) Geographical Indication System. In this respect, classes (sub-divided into three lessons of two hours) will delve into three main topics: i) the recent legislative Regulation 1143/2024, which introduces the “issue of sustainability in the GI Regulation; ii) the GIs System in Spain and Extremadura Region; iii) the GIs System In Portugal and Alentejo Region. Italy, Spain and Portugal represent the backbone of the Mediterranean GI System in Europe and present specific aspects of fragility which must be considered and managed. A final online lesson (2 hours) will be provided on September 26th, to summarise and facilitate a general discussion on the issue of sustainability in GI systems.

Eligibility and participation criteria

To apply for this program, students must be regularly enrolled at one of the participating universities ([EU GREEN partner universities](#)). Applicants must be enrolled in a Master's (**bachelor's fourth year students from Spain and Romania are accepted**) or PhD level degree.

At the time of the application submission, applicants must demonstrate proof of English language competence at the B1/B2 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**
Law; Political Science and International Relations; International and European Relations, Ecology, Environmental Sciences, Design sostenibile per il Sistema Alimentare, Food science and technology, Economia e Management dei Sistemi Alimentari Sostenibili (EMSAS), Food Safety and Food Risk Management, Food Sciences for Innovation and Authenticity,
- **University of Evora**
Any discipline related to the contents of the BIP
- **University of Angers applicants**
Any discipline related to the contents of the BIP
- **University of Extremadura applicants**
Any discipline related to the contents of the BIP
- **Wroclaw University of Environmental and Life Sciences**
Any discipline related to the contents of the BIP
- **Universitatea din Oradea**
Any discipline related to the contents of the BIP
- **Atlantic Technological University**
Any discipline related to the contents of the BIP
- **Otto-von Guericke Universität Magdeburg**
Any discipline related to the contents of the BIP
- **Högskolan i Gävle**
Any discipline related to the contents of the BIP

Applicants should expect to hear back about the result of their application by **15 July 2025**.

Selected students must communicate their acceptance or withdrawal within 10 days from 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 **June 30th 2025**.

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
- Motivation
- English language competence
- Evaluation of further qualifications and skills

Students can expect to hear back about the outcome of their application by **July 15th 2025**. Selected students must communicate their acceptance or withdrawal within 10 days from 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.

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. Michele Maccari](#)

University of Extremadura

[Prof. Francisco Javier Mesías](#)

Contacts

University of Evora

[Prof. Maria Raquel Lucas](#)