

High-level Specialised Training Course **Improving safety for coastal communities in the IORA countries: managing, adapting and mitigating anthropogenic pressures**

Tricase (Le) 12-19 April, 2026

INTRODUCTION

- CIHEAM Bari held, in 2024 and 2025, two High-level Specialised Training Courses directed at delegates coming from the IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association) countries, carrying out valuable capacity-building initiatives and strengthening ties from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean. Funds were provided by the Directorate General for Global Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.
- Overall, already fourteen officials coming from nine IORA countries (India, Kenya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, South Africa, and UAE) and representing the ministries involved (Economic Development, Tourism, Environment, and in general related to Blue Economy) benefited from the training activities in the past two years.
- Both the first and the second edition of the training course were organized for a total duration of one week, combining frontal lectures with interactive activities, reaching successful outcomes. Sessions included group exercises, study tours, and in-depth discussions with lecturers, external experts, and local stakeholders, creating a dynamic and engaging learning environment.
- Each of the two editions focused on some of the main issues that IORA daily deals with, and pledged to address in its Communications, as well as in its multiannual Action plans (2017-2021 and 2022-2026), from the “Sustainable management and development of coastal and marine tourism”, to the “Innovative Approaches to Fisheries Management”.
- Given these well-received experiences, in order to valorise the relations, the practical know-how, and the set of skills built over the years, a third training course is being proposed here to the Directorate General for Global Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

- Expanding the pattern of knowledge and competences, acquiring from the insights provided by the beneficiaries, and following the IORA Priority Areas, this year the focus would be on the ways to improve safety and better address the anthropogenic pressures in the coastal communities of the IORA region.

PREAMBLE

- The IORA region, home to over 2.5 billion people, more than half of whom live within 100 km of the coast, faces multiple, interconnected anthropogenic pressures, that undermine ecosystems' resilience and the well-being of local communities.
- Among the principal threats are the degradation of ocean health, pollution from land and vessels, and the unlawful exploitation of marine resources, which collectively intensify environmental degradation, weaken ecosystem resilience, and heighten socio-economic vulnerabilities.
- Alongside these human-induced drivers, the impacts of climate change operate through a compounding feedback mechanism, amplifying existing environmental risks and further straining ecosystems, which are experiencing the fastest rate of temperature increase among the world's oceans, with projections indicating a rise of 1.7–3.8 °C above pre-industrial levels.
- This warming is intensifying coral bleaching, habitat degradation, and extreme climatic events, resulting in a substantial reduction, approximately 38% since 1970, in the productivity of critical coastal sectors, particularly fisheries.
- In addressing these escalating pressures, Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are increasingly recognized for combating climate change and habitat degradation, fostering biodiversity and enhancing ecosystem services.
- A prominent example is the restoration of mangroves and wetlands, which play critical roles in carbon sequestration, coastal protection, and conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems.
- Therefore, it is deemed necessary to develop a training program focused on enhancing the safety of coastal communities, to strengthen IORA member states' capacity from rising human pressures. The course will prioritise capacity building and the transfer of technical and managerial skills to increase national and local preparedness for, and

response to, pollution, maritime security, habitat loss and climate-driven hazards. It will combine theoretical modules with targeted field visits, emphasising practical mitigation and adaptation measures.

- The program closely aligns with the IORA Action Plan on Development and Disaster Risk Management (DRM), fostering regional cooperation, integrated policies and institutional strengthening. It also reflects the objectives of the IORA Sustainable Development Program (ISDP) by promoting peer-to-peer learning, sharing of knowledge, experiences and best practices.

OBJECTIVES

This capacity-building program aligns with several priorities within the IORA Action Plan for 2022-27, including: environmental sustainability; climate change adaptation and mitigation; capacity building, monitoring, data; blue economy, marine environment and disaster risk reduction and resilience; institutional strengthening and marine safety and security.

The aim of the course is to strengthen the technical and institutional capacities of IORA Member States to improve the sustainable management of coastal communities, ensure safety in the region in the faces of climate change and some detrimental anthropogenic pressures on coastal areas.

By providing specialized training, this course will equip professionals from the IORA region with useful skills in environmental risk assessment, data monitoring, policy development, and adaptive management, enabling them to better face the safety challenges to their coastal areas, through the design of evidence-based action plans, the improvement of legislation, and the strengthening of the resilience and sustainability in their respective coastal communities.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course participants will manage to:

- Enhance participants' knowledge and skills to identify and address emerging threats in coastal communities, monitor and manage pollution, implement biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration measures, enabling them to promote safe, sustainable, and resilient coastal environments

- Strengthening participants' capacity to apply scientific knowledge, practical tools, and governance approaches to managing coastal resources, reducing environmental risks, and enhancing community resilience to climate change and human pressures
- Design and plan governance frameworks, engage key actors, and utilize practical tools and best practices to enhance decision-making, develop action plans, and implement effective policies and legislation that might foster sustainable development, resilience, and adaptive management in their coastal communities.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course will be organized for a total duration of one week. Classes will include frontal lectures and interactive activities integrated with study tours and discussion sessions with private stakeholders.

The training approach is designed to transfer both technical and practical knowledge, using lectures and best practices, to enhance and modernize the fisheries sector in IORA countries.

The course will be held at the Tricase branch of CIHEAM Bari (Lecce) where the activities will be carried out.

BENEFICIARIES

The course is addressed to a maximum of 14 participants from IORA countries directly involved in these categories/bodies:

- Government officials from Ministries of fisheries, marine resources, and environment
- Local authorities and stakeholders (Officers from public entities, municipalities, regional park, MPAs, etc.)
- Policy makers and regional decision-makers (Members of national and regional bodies involved in marine resource management and international cooperation).
- Leaders of coastal communities and fishing cooperatives (Representatives from local communities, local development agencies and fishing cooperatives).

They will be nominated by the competent Ministries in which they are employed, who will authorize the candidates to apply for the course.

COSTS

ITALY will cover full accommodation, local transportation, pocket money and all training costs as foreseen in Annex 1.

IORA countries will cover all international travel and visa costs.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

English is the communication and educational language of the program.

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TENTATIVE COURSE PROGRAM

Lectures

Morning 9:30 – 13:00 Afternoon 14:30 – 17:30

Saturday- Sunday	*ARRIVAL - TRANSFER TO TRICASE INTRODUCTION TO THE TRAINING COURSE		Brindisi airport
Monday 13th	Rising risks: tackling the growing threats to coastal communities	<i>Classroom</i>	Tricase
Tuesday 14th	Turning the tide: advanced strategies to monitor and manage coastal and marine pollution	<i>Classroom</i>	Tricase
Wednesday 15th	Climate adaptation and resilience planning for coastal regions	<i>Classroom and field visit</i>	Tricase/Lecce
Thursday 16th	An effective governance for coastal communities: tools, institutions and actors	<i>Classroom</i>	Tricase
Friday 17th	Restoring ecosystems for a biodiverse future	<i>Classroom and field visit</i>	Torre Guaceto
Saturday 18th	Award ceremony		Tricase
Sunday	*DEPARTURE		Bari airport

* The arrival and departure dates will depend on the international flight schedule