

Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Italian Regions

**TERRITORIAL PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN  
AREA**

**THE ITALIAN INITIATIVE**

Concept Paper  
CeSPI

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

**Sustainable development** constitutes an objective of growing importance on the international political agenda that sets the battle against poverty and protection of the environment and natural resources as priority challenges. The health of the seas and the oceans, protecting biodiversity, damage to health deriving from carbon dioxide emissions, but also themes such as social/economic development and maintaining peace among peoples are primary issues of sustainable development<sup>1</sup>.

This is an ethical and political principle that implies a moral obligation for the present generation to guarantee future generations a quality of life at least comparable to its own. Sustainable development therefore requires the economic and social dynamics of modern economies to be compatible with improving living conditions and the ability of natural resources to reproduce in an indefinite manner.

Indeed, due to its triple environmental, social and economic dimension, sustainable development requires substantial changes in individual behaviour and **in the choices of the decision-makers operating at various levels** (international-national-territorial) **of political and administrative government**. These changes are necessary and urgent in the light of the serious problems of unsustainability linked with the present models of production and consumption and to the persistent social/economic gap between the North and the South of the world.

These challenges met with a more systematic and multilateral response in 1992 already, with the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit that gave life to international agreements and conventions on crucial questions such as desertification, deforestation and climatic change. With **Agenda 21**, indications are given as to the action to be undertaken in order to strike a balance in the long term, between economic and social needs and the limited resources of the planet, with the involvement of institutions at all levels, governments, international bodies and local authorities.

From Rio to Johannesburg<sup>2</sup>, there have been many opportunities for the States on the planet to meet under the aegis of the United Nations and these have contributed to define a global vision of the future of humanity, which have resulted in national and local programmes and policies. The political declaration and, above all, its Plan of Action reaffirm the commitment to achieve the Millennium objectives and to implement the agreements and conventions already signed in other contexts. As for health and environment, **five priority action areas** have been identified: water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity,<sup>3</sup> while a new approach to solving sustainable development problems has emerged, with a growing role for **public-private partnerships** in the implementation of concrete programmes and sectorial initiatives.

**The European Union** (EU) has expressed its political will to achieve the Rio and the Johannesburg objectives and has formulated strategic policies for sustainable development. In December 1999, when asked by the Helsinki European Council to formulate a proposal for a long term strategy for sustainable economic, social and environmental development, the European Commission produced a document<sup>4</sup> that englobes the Lisbon<sup>5</sup> objectives into the environmental dimension, while stressing the major challenges Europe will have to face in the next few years.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the first definition contained in the Brundtland report “Our Common Future” ( World Commission on Environment and Development, “Our Common Future”, 1987)., sustainable development “...is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs...”.

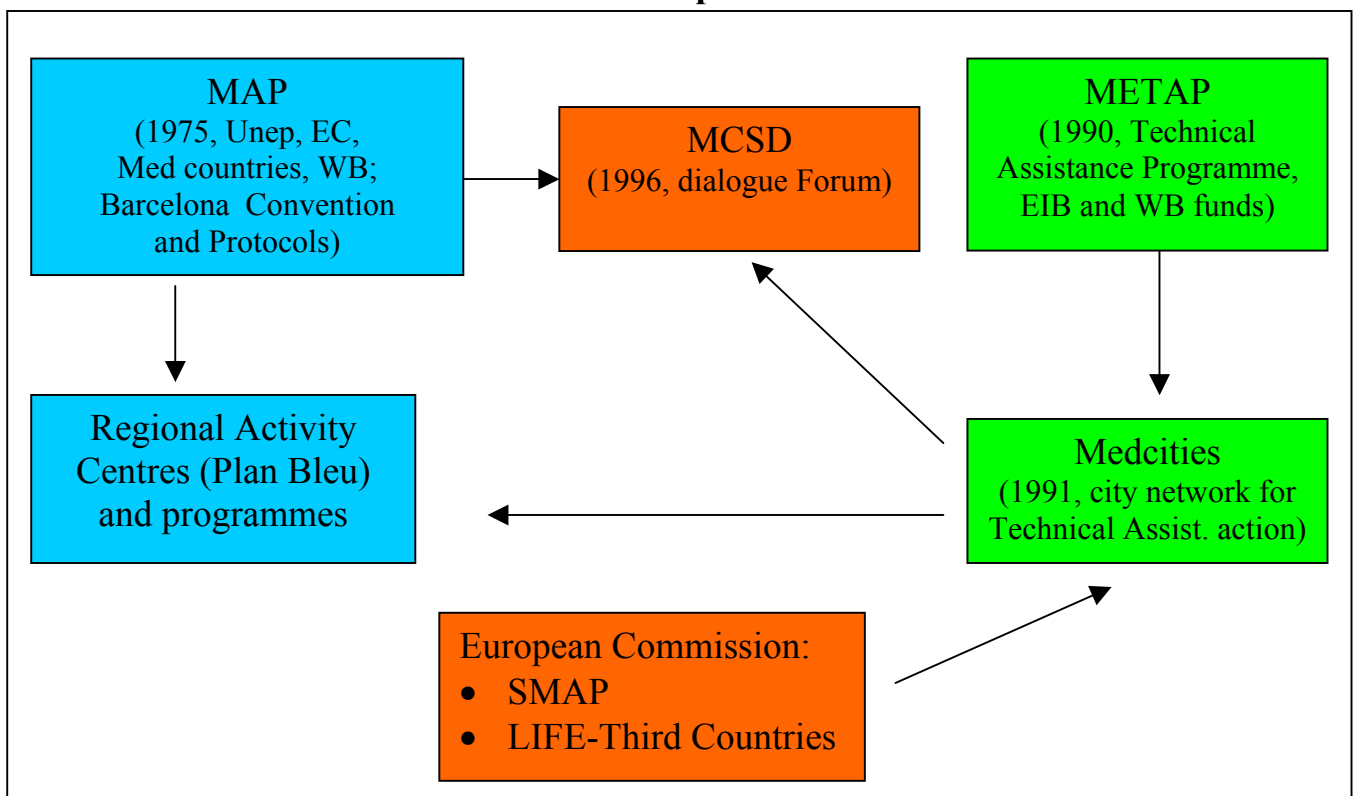
<sup>2</sup> Plan of Action, World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg, 26 August-4 September 2002.

<sup>3</sup> The countries committed themselves to halve the population without access to purified or drinking water by 2015; to increase access to electric power – in particular to renewable sources of energy – and to the gradual elimination of energy subsidies; to promote the use and the production of chemical substances that are not harmful to health and environment by 2020 by eliminating POPs; to include fighting desertification among the focal areas of GEF (Global Environment Facility); to reduce the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Communication from the Commission “A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development”, 2001.

As for the Mediterranean, the Barcelona Convention and the *Mediterranean Action Plan* (MAP) have inaugurated a new partnership between the European Union and the countries in the area with the objective of guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity in the region in a context of sustainable development and environmental protection. From the environmental point of view, the countries belonging to the Mediterranean basin share similar opportunities and challenges, but also a **strong interdependence**, that requires an adequate and consistent response in a regional, national and local perspective. Loss of biodiversity, impoverishment of the soil, degradation of the natural and cultural heritage, desertification are problems common to the whole Mediterranean environment. It is for this reason that various programmes and international community forums have been launched, the main ones being the *Mediterranean Technical Assistance Programme* (METAP) with the city network MEDCITIES, the *Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development* (MCSD), the *Short and Medium Term Environmental Action Programme* (SMAP) and *Life-Third Countries* (see annex 1), in which the European Union plays a leading part in enabling cooperation with Mediterranean countries.

### The main networks for sustainable development in the Mediterranean



In these programmes, **sub-state authorities and civil society organisations acquire an ever more important role**. The strong territorial component of the environment naturally attributes a major role to local communities in the implementation of sustainable development policies, as affirmed by Agenda 21.

In this context, Italy's role becomes crucial, as a result of the importance that the Mediterranean countries have for our country in terms of political, economic and commercial cooperation and because of the growing need to fight environmental risks that face our common natural resources. The urbanisation phenomena that threaten the wealth of the soil, lead to rural areas being abandoned, contribute to desertification processes and increase the disequilibrium between internal

<sup>5</sup> "...to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth..."

and coastal areas, must receive an adequate response not only from our national policies but also and mainly from regional and municipal authorities, specially from the coastal areas, where the pressure on the environment is greater. The management of rural areas needs a national strategy for balanced development, but it calls into question above all **local communities** whose task it is to manage the resources available. Tourism, that represents the main field of activity of the Mediterranean basin as a whole, can represent both a considerable opportunity for development but also an environmental threat for our country and our neighbours.

Today, there are over 700 local bodies in Italy involved in implementing Agenda 21 processes, out of a European total of approximately 1880. The environmental issue has acquired considerable weight also in the context of **Italian regions and local autonomous authorities**, both through their participation in international thematic programmes and through the transformation of this issue into national and international instruments dedicated to sub-state bodies. Institutional awareness of environmental questions is accompanied by an increase in specific *know-how* and proven technical experience at local level. The various international cooperation initiatives of regions and local authorities show a clear thematic specialisation<sup>6</sup> and ability to achieve significant synergies at various levels, from local agencies to international organisations (see annex 2).

However, broad and incisive strategies and actions call for further efforts and new ways of **creating territorial governments so as to create a strong consensus** among the various political and administrative levels (*multilevel governance*), the various territorial subjects and the Mediterranean area territories (territorial partnerships, see paragraph 3). This presupposes a political dialogue, knowing each other very well, and defining programmes and initiatives that are able to intervene and that are based on local specificities, on common interests, on willingness to accept to debate with others and to open up to participation. The objective of all the countries of the Mediterranean basin to guide development towards more sustainable models must therefore lead to partnership processes and concrete projects, able to make the most of the opportunities offered by the new cooperation instruments and programmes that foster sustainable development. Here, the European neighbourhood policy offers sub-state authorities and the various territorial subjects a considerable innovative reference framework.

## 2. THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUB-STATE GOVERNMENTS

The enlargement of the European Union to ten new member states, formalised in May 2004, has deeply changed the geography of the Union, that must now tackle relations with new neighbours, the former Soviet Union countries, and reshape its relations with Mediterranean basin countries in a coherent manner in order to counterbalance the shift eastwards. The new neighbourhood policy is the answer to the challenges created by these new neighbours. In March 2003, the Commission outlined its neighbourhood policy for the first time, thus offering a very broad and ambitious vision. Indeed, the objectives were to create a prosperous and neighbourly area just beyond its borders, with the conviction that in future, **“the Union’s ability to guarantee its citizens security, stability and sustainable development, shall be indissolubly linked to its will to intensify relations with its neighbours.”**<sup>7</sup> In substance, the union’s offer to its neighbours consists in offering them a privileged position on the internal market, and a larger participation in the four main liberties, including free movement of people, in return for the adoption of economic and institutional reforms,

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<sup>6</sup> The main themes addressed by the international cooperation of the Italian regions and local bodies in the field of environment and sustainable development are integrated water management, integrated waste management, management of coasts, fighting desertification and sustainable rural development, safeguard/protection of natural resources and biodiversity, sustainable urban development.

<sup>7</sup> Commission of the European Communities, *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, COM (2003) 104, 11.3.2003, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/pdf/com03\\_104\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/pdf/com03_104_en.pdf)

and effective cooperation in the field of energy, transport and the fight against terrorism on the part of the countries involved.

The substantial novelty of the neighbourhood policy is that right from the beginning it recognizes the strong interdependence between the European union and its neighbours, which is the basis for the declared attempt of the new policy to **overcome the net distinction between domestic and foreign policy**, thus offering countries whose accession is not envisaged, advantages and opportunities reserved up to now for Union members only.

For this purpose, the Commission has decided to create a new financial instrument, that may be used within and beyond the borders of the Union. In July 2003, a specific Commission communication<sup>8</sup> dedicated to this possibility envisaged creating the new instrument in two steps, thus devoting the 2004-2006 period to **coordinating existing instruments** (for the Mediterranean and the Western Balkans, coordination of MEDA, CARDS and INTERREG is achieved through the Neighbourhood Programmes) then, after 2007, the new neighbourhood instrument would be created.

On 12 May 2004, the Commission published a strategy document<sup>9</sup> in which it outlines the neighbourhood policy, defines its principles and contents as well as suggesting a concrete implementation course. **The countries** the policy addresses are: for Europe, Russia, the Ukraine, Belarus and Moldavia; for the Mediterranean area, all the countries involved in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership or the Barcelona process, minus Turkey, which is in the European Union pre-accession phase, with the addition of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

The method proposed by the Commission to reach the neighbourhood policy objectives consists in defining, together with neighbouring countries, a series of priorities to be included in **Action Plans**, based on a mutual commitment to respect shared values, such as the respect of human rights including the rights of minorities, legality, sound government, the promotion of neighbourly relations, market economy and sustainable development principles, as well as certain foreign policy objectives. Furthermore the action plans will address certain key sectors, such as the environment and sustainable development that is a transversal and priority theme. The action plans will be based on the principle of differentiation, they will therefore be drawn up for each country on the basis of the actual state of cooperation relations between the country in question and the European Union. Once the objectives laid down in the action Plans, that may last three to five years, have been reached, it will be possible to stipulate a new contractual relationship between the European Union and the neighbouring countries, the **European Neighbourhood Agreements**, that will replace the current bilateral agreements.

The strategic document of 12 May 2004 also defines more precisely the options for funding the neighbourhood policy: the resources for the **Neighbourhood Programmes** have been identified (see Annex 3 on the selection procedure) for the 2004-2006 period: 225 million Euros from external cooperation funds (of which the 45 million from MEDA and the 45 million from CARDS), and 700 million Euros from the INTERREG programme for the internal borders of the Union.

The recent Commission proposal to reorganise and simplify radically the European Union's external assistance,<sup>10</sup> has conferred further importance to the neighbourhood policy, and indicates

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<sup>8</sup> Commission of the European Communities, *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. Paving the Way for a new Neighbourhood Instrument*, COM (2003) 3939 final, 1 July 2003.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/components\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/components_en.htm)

<sup>9</sup> Commission of the European Communities, *Communication from the European Commission. European Neighbourhood Policy. Strategy Paper*, COM (2004) 373 final, 12.5.2004,

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/pdf/strategy/Strategy\\_Paper\\_EN.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/pdf/strategy/Strategy_Paper_EN.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Commission of the European Communities, *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the Instruments for External Assistance under the New Financial Perspectives, 2007-2013*, COM(2004) 626 final, 29.9.2004, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/reform/document/com04\\_626\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/reform/document/com04_626_en.pdf)

the **new neighbourhood and partnership instrument** (*European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument*, ENPI) as one of the new instruments that will replace the MEDA and Tacis programmes as well as others such as the human rights and democracy initiative, by 2007. The new neighbourhood and partnership instrument will have two main objectives, to promote economic integration and deepen political cooperation between the EU and partner countries, and to tackle the specific challenges and opportunities that derive from geographical proximity between the Union and its neighbours.

ENPI will include, as well as the fight against poverty, also measures for the progressive integration into the internal market of the European Union, for legislative convergence and institution strengthening through mechanisms such as exchange of experiences, long term twinning agreements with member states and participation in Community programmes and agencies. This convergence should focus mainly on environment and sustainable development policies, promoting close collaboration between the various levels of government and between territories that share similar environmental challenges and natural resources. Here, the new instrument emphasizes the role of **trans-border cooperation** between sub-state authorities, and envisages funding common programmes that link together regions and local bodies in the member states and in the partner countries, with a bold simplification of procedures and effectiveness, and with the use of mechanisms similar to those of the structural funds, such as multi-annual programming, partnerships and co-financing.

The proposal for a regulation establishing ENPI<sup>11</sup> defines its characteristics with precision, and clarifies the eligible subjects and territories located along the land and maritime borders, and the resources available. As for **the resources**, it is envisaged that slightly under **15 billion Euros** in all be allocated to cooperation with neighbouring countries, for the 2007-2013 period.

The reorganisation of European union external assistance clarifies also the position of the Western Balkans, which during the transition period, were included –from the *practical*, but not the *political* point of view- in the neighbourhood policy, with the adjustment of the CARDS neighbourhood programmes for the 2004-2007 period. The new financial prospects envisage **a new pre-accession instrument** (*Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance*, IPA), that will replace Phare, SAPARD, ISPA, Phare CBC and above all CARDS programmes. Assistance to the Western Balkans will therefore be regulated by IPA, to which over all, approximately **14 billion Euros**<sup>12</sup> are allocated. In this case too, trans-border cooperation will be an important component of the instrument. For this cooperation, both for ENPI and for IPA, an additional contribution of 233 million Euros a year from the European Regional Development Fund has been decided.

The greatest opportunities for Italian local and regional subjects as well as for those from the European Union and partner countries, lie precisely in the intersection between domestic and foreign policy that neighbourhood and pre-accession policies introduce, and in the adoption of structural fund mechanisms in trans-border cooperation with neighbouring countries. By using the experience they have acquired in planning and managing Community funds when implementing economic and social cohesion policies, the Regions can become active subjects of neighbourhood policy too, by developing partnership relations with the sub-state authorities of the Mediterranean countries in order to manage the programmes planned on the land and maritime borders of the Union.

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<sup>11</sup>Commission of the European Communities, *Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument*, com (2004) 628 final, 29.9.2004, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/reform/document/com04\\_628\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/reform/document/com04_628_en.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Commission of the European Communities, *Proposal for a Council Regulation establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)*, COM(2004)627 final, 29.9.2004, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/reform/document/com04\\_627\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/reform/document/com04_627_en.pdf)

### 3. BUILDING TERRITORIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Therefore the main objectives of the neighbourhood policy and its implementation methods also impact on the role of the regions and sub-state subjects in general, both within the EU member states and in the Mediterranean countries. In the case of Italy, over the last fifteen years, the international cooperation of the regions has led to specially meaningful experiences based above all on decentralised and trans-border cooperation modes. The relations Italian regions and local autonomous authorities have with the more or less corresponding authorities in other countries now must make a quantum leap by adopting a more highly advanced form of cooperation: territorial partnerships.

These partnerships between territories have developed to different degrees in the different regions and local contexts and are still undergoing redefinition, however they do have a number of characteristics and fundamental principles in common, which suggests that they are valid instruments for neighbourhood policy implementation.

First of all, territorial partnerships have **national and international development policies as reference framework**, (in our case the new neighbourhood policy). They are therefore based on strong integration and collaboration with the various national, Community and international institutional levels, necessary for the so-called multi-level *governance*. Thus territorial partnerships should have a common planning framework that is the **Action Plans** laid down in the neighbourhood policy, and **bilateral cooperation policies** between the Ministry of Foreign affairs and the Mediterranean countries.

Territorial partnerships are based on a concept of cooperation as support to development processes rather than as creator of development through the preparation and implementation of projects. In practical terms, this implies a shift from a project approach (short term, guided by supply, lead by experts), to a **vision based on strategies and programmes** (medium and long term, guided by demand, process-like). This process approach is essential also and mainly to ensure **continuity in time** and partnership relationship sustainability.

**Political dialogue** and relations between sub-state governments are therefore expressed in multi-annual common development programmes, based on an exchange of policies and on common co-development objectives. The complexity of these relations means that the **little steps approach** is privileged, a progressive and gradual process to build up learning and trust, skill and credibility, through relations with all those involved.

The international territorial partnership is based on a **“bottom up” approach** to development with compatible objectives such as economic growth, environmental sustainability, the spread of democracy and social cohesion. Here, by referring to principles of participatory development and by promoting the application of the principle of subsidiarity, partnerships can help to affirm the objectives of the neighbourhood policy based on promoting and sharing common values. From this point of view, partnerships express a **strong ownership** of development policies on the part of local communities, in so far as the partnership relationship is based on shared values and on the recognition of mutual interests.

**The participatory approach** to the development promoted by international territorial partnerships implies a fine network of tangible and intangible interchange relations, open to all subjects in the cooperating territories (enterprises, social and professional associations, banks, universities, research centres, etc.), and it leads to systemic partnerships within one's own territory, based on its vocations and on mutual interests, which entrusts the role of facilitators and coordinators of the action of the various subjects involved to sub-state governments.

**The territorial approach** and the involvement of a number of subjects make it possible to promote and respect the many vocations and identities of the territories involved, and to follow different courses according to context and in particular to the combination of historic and geographic factors peculiar to the partner territories.

Territorial partnership does not presuppose that partners have homogeneous institutions, but rather that they share the same principles and above all the same co-development perspective. Up to now, practical experience shows only on-going territorial partnerships, however the approach has proved to be feasible, flexible and effective, even in very different contexts.

The concept of partnership can therefore be understood both as a sort of ideal legislative model that clarifies principles and guidelines for the international cooperation of the regions, and as an objective to work towards, fruit of a medium-long term process to build common regulations and lasting networks of “trans-local” relations in the global context and that of EU foreign policy.

Even though territorial partnerships could be defined further in conceptual terms and perfected in terms of political practice, their characteristics so far described prove their high potential in relation to the objectives of the neighbourhood policy and Italian cooperation with Mediterranean countries.

#### **4. THE “ITALIAN ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN” INITIATIVE**

In the context of neighbourhood policy, and in particular referring to the launching of Neighbourhood Programmes, which will take place in 2005 and to the network of programmes for sustainable development in the Mediterranean, the Italian Regions, with the Ministry of Foreign affairs, intend to **strengthen their own cooperation action by initiating a process to create territorial partnerships with sub-state Authorities of the various Mediterranean countries**, with the agreement of their respective central governments, thus promoting the active participation of economic operators and civil society.

To this end, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Italian Regions, in particular those of Southern Italy, have launched **the “Environment and Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean” initiative** whose objective is to identify and define territorial partnership projects to be included in the next national and community calls for proposals in the field of regional cooperation and neighbourhood programmes. This will come about thanks to a process based on an analysis of the on-going partnership relations and of future opportunities for environmental cooperation and sustainable development, the identification of project ideas and a discussion between Italian, Mediterranean and Baltic partners that will lead to an International Seminar to be held in Basilicata in December next. After the seminar, the draft projects should be completed in order to have access to the resources of the neighbourhood programme and of other national and international channels. This process is summarised in figure 1.

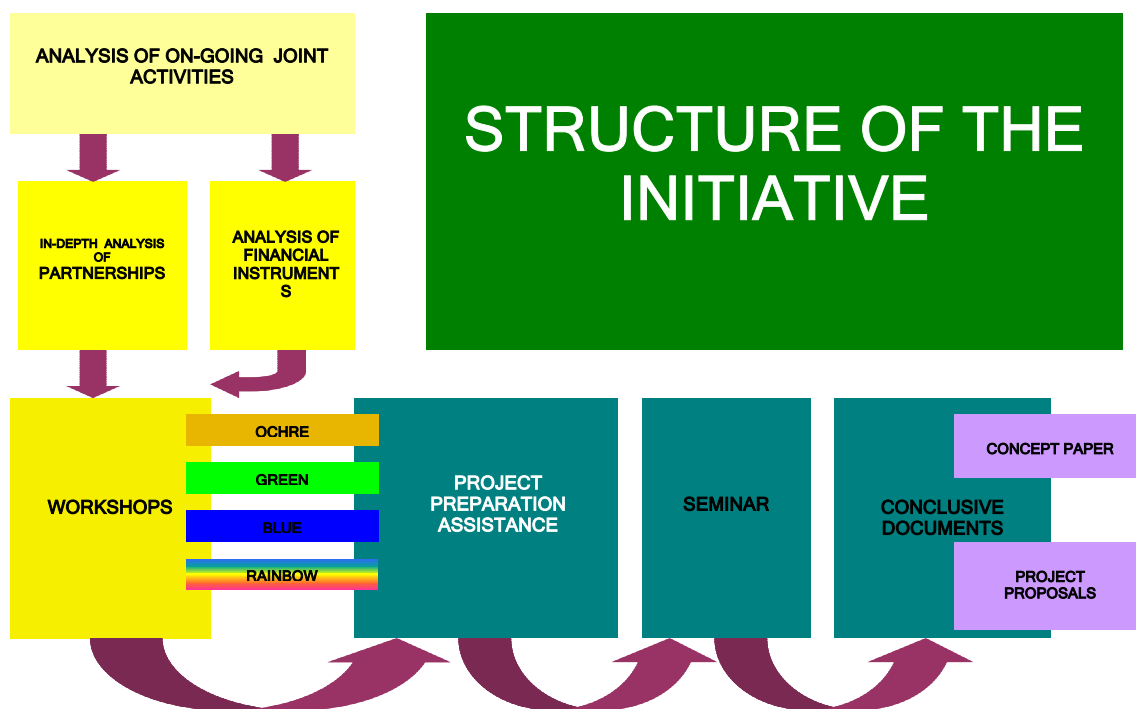
The first step will be to analyse the projects of local, regional, national, Community and international bodies on sustainable development in the Mediterranean and Balkan countries that are already under way. This will cover cooperation projects and other forms of collaboration, in order to prepare an exhaustive picture of the network of relations that exist in the area.

Next will follow the identification and the selection of strategic partners in the Mediterranean and the Baltic areas: for this, the collaboration of the diplomatic-consular network of the Ministry of Foreign affairs as well as the relations that the Regions already entertain with their equivalent bodies in the Mediterranean will be essential. It will thus be possible to pursue a useful and in-depth dialogue with public and private operators in the Mediterranean and the Balkan area, thus paving the way for a new Euro-Mediterranean network of territorial sustainable development operators.

In this phase, an updated report on all national and international programmes available to the

Regions and local Authorities in the field of sustainable development and inter-regional cooperation with the Mediterranean and the Balkan countries will be drawn up. The selection of a number of priority themes for the creation of partnerships and inter-regional cooperation on environment and sustainable development will complete this analysis process.

**Figure 1**



Throughout this phase, the CeSPI Working Group will involve and serve local and territorial authorities, so that they can play the leading role in the whole process.

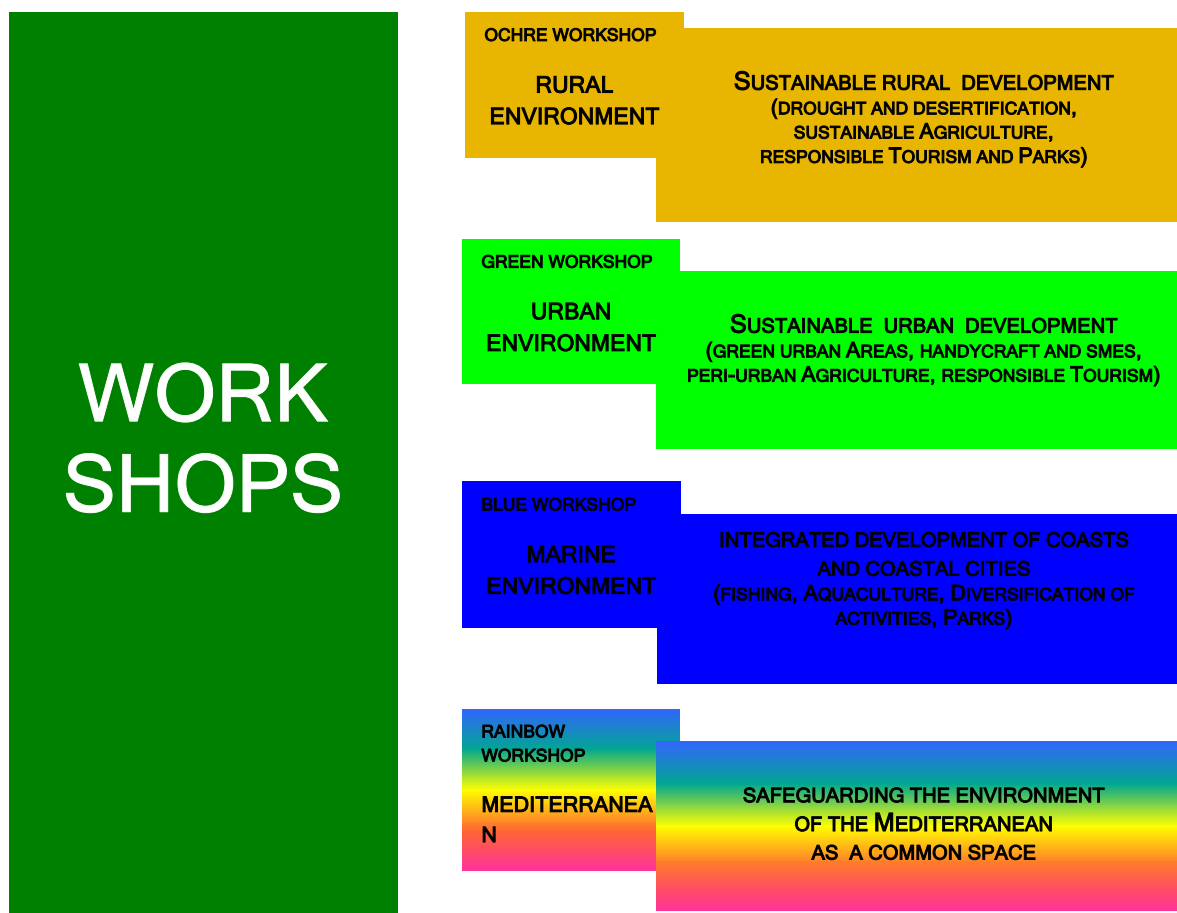
At the end of this stage, four workshops will be set up to address four themes: sustainable development of rural areas, sustainable development in cities, sustainable development of coasts and environmental protection in the Mediterranean seen as a common space. The participants of the workshops will be Regions, Mediterranean and Balkan partners and public and private institutions that are active in promoting sustainable development. In these workshops, the Italian participants and the partner countries will discuss development policies, ways of building and strengthening regional partnerships and concrete project strategies, with CeSPI helping to fill out the forms that are necessary to define concrete cooperation projects among neighbouring countries.

The Ochre workshop will deal with themes relating to development and environment in rural areas, taking into account also the experience that Regions and European local Authorities have with methods for planning sustainable rural development, certifying typical productions, promoting local animation Groups (GAL), organic and sustainable agriculture, eco-responsible tourism, park management and eco-systems' protection.

In the green workshop, the focus will be on the application of agenda 21 in urban areas, on public environmental services, with special reference to integrated waste management and integrated water cycle management and on regional and local environmental protection agencies. The blue workshop will work on the sustainable development of coasts and coastal cities, the management of port agencies, transport, tourism and fisheries. Finally, the Rainbow workshop will look into the need to develop languages, information and data, as well as indicators, that are as uniform and harmonised as possible among the partners, so that policies and projects are then based on shared,

in-depth knowledge. Workshop results will contribute to check that the necessary conditions for initiating partnership relations actually exist, as well as verifying the contents of the action to be undertaken on the basis of a shared and well-defined thematic approach.

**Figure 2**



In December, an international seminar during which the workshop results will be discussed, will be organised in Matera, Basilicata. All the Italian Regions involved, local Authorities, the institutions and the organisations in the partner countries will take part. The seminar will mark the close of the initiative, it will produce a document that summarises the whole process and a number of possible projects to be presented to programmes for neighbouring and pre-accession areas (MEDA, CARDS), or which are complementary to activities already included in the INTERREG programme. But above all, it will have triggered the territorial partnership creation process that must then be able to continue to find common visions, cooperation programmes and projects for the environment and sustainable development in the Mediterranean.

## ANNEX 1

### PROGRAMMES FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Italian regions and local authorities are participating more and more in the programmes and initiatives for sustainable development that have been launched since the '70s, starting with the ones that can be considered the main reference initiatives in the area: the *Mediterranean Action Plan* (MAP) and the *Mediterranean Technical Assistance Programme* (METAP).

**The MAP**, set up in 1975 in Barcelona under the aegis of the UNEP (*United Nations Environment Programme*), involves the 21 Mediterranean coastal States<sup>13</sup> and the EU, and it operates in the context of coastal region integrated planning and management, in order to protect the environment and improve the quality of life in the Mediterranean basin. MAP produced the Barcelona Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean sea and its 6 protocols, it operates through the *Regional Activity Centres* and it collaborates actively with international and non-governmental organisations.

Fifteen years later, in 1990, the World Bank and the European investment Bank created **METAP** (they were then joined among others, by the European Commission), which is the Programme that brings together the Mediterranean area Countries and multilateral donors and is aimed at offering technical assistance for projects in the environmental field and also at improving environmental management skills. The beneficiary member states are Albania, Algeria, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, the West Bank and Gaza. The programme is currently in the fourth stage (2001-2005), centred on *capacity building* themes (on priority issues such as quality of water, urban waste and hazardous waste, policy and legislation issues) and on project preparation; the overall value of the activities undertaken in the previous stages amounts to 60 million dollars.

In 1991, on METAP's initiative, **MEDCITIES** was created. It is a network of Mediterranean coastal cities aimed at improving the environmental skills of the authorities involved in sustainable urban development. MEDCITIES operates on the basis of medium term environmental plans, followed by technical and training projects among cities, aimed at addressing identified priorities. Numerous cities in the area take part in MEDCITIES<sup>14</sup>.

The creation of MEDCITIES is a tangible sign of the attention accorded by METAP to the **role of local authorities** in managing environmental problems; furthermore, the city network participates in MAP as a permanent observer, in order to promote the importance of sustainable urban development.

The role of local authorities is recognised and enhanced also by the *Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development* (MCSDD), which is a dialogue forum set up in Barcelona in 1995. The forum receives the operational support of MAP, and operates through working groups focused on various issues: sustainable management of coastal areas, water management, sustainable development indicators, sustainable tourism and development, industry and environment, information, free trade and environment, urban management and sustainable development. The participants to the forum are experts indicated by the Mediterranean coastal States, representatives of the European Community and civil society, NGOs, social and economic sector representatives and local authorities; and of course also MEDCITIES.

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<sup>13</sup> Albania, Algeria, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

<sup>14</sup> Barcelona, Marseilles, Monaco, Palermo (that has replaced Brindisi) and Rome, Tirana (Albania), Dubrovnik (Croatia), Thessaloniki (Greece), Izmir and Silifke (Turkey), Latakia and Aleppo (Syria), Limassol and Larnaca (Cyprus), Al-Mina and Tripoli (Lebanon), Haifa and Ashdod (Israel), Alexandria (Egypt), Benghazi (Libya), Sousse and Sfax (Tunisia), Gozo (Malta), Tangers and Tetouan (Morocco), Zarqa (Jordan), Koper (Slovenia).

It must be noted that there is further room for contacts between local Authorities on Mediterranean environmental questions through the numerous existing associations. The first example is the ***Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions*** (CPMR): set up in 1973 as an association of coastal regions located on the coasts of the European seas, it currently includes 149 Regions from 27 States (European Union members and non). The aim of the CPMR is to promote a balanced and multi-centric development in Europe, and to develop all forms of inter-regional cooperation. The fields of activity of the conference include maritime issues, agriculture, sustainable development, inter-regional cooperation and external cooperation; these themes are brought to the attention of the various geographical Committees that guarantee that the structure works, indeed there is one Committee for the Balkans and one for the Mediterranean.

Furthermore, in 2000, in Gaza (the Palestinian National authority), the ***Standing Committee for Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of the Local and Regional Authorities*** (COPPEM) was set up upon the initiative of the Council of the European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the Arab Town Organisation (ATO). The participants of COPPEM are members elected by their respective national Associations so as to represent the Regions, Municipalities, Provinces and local Authorities of the European Union Countries and of the 12 Mediterranean partner Countries. The aim of COPPEM is to promote cooperation for local development among Cities, Municipalities, Local and Regional Authorities of the Countries involved in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, and to foster their participation in the MEDA programme and other financial instruments.

Moreover, local authorities have the leading role in the context of European Union external cooperation programmes devoted to environment and sustainable development in the Mediterranean. During the Helsinki Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on the Environment (1997), the ***Short and Medium Term Environmental Action Programme*** (SMAP) was set up, it funds projects for environmental protection in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership context. The five main themes identified as priority ones by SMAP are: integrated water management, integrated waste management, *hot spots* (locations that are specially relevant for pollution problems or for their wealth in terms of biodiversity), integrated management of coasts and desertification. The programme is financed with MEDA funds, to which **decentralised cooperation** participants are entitled; SMAP itself indicates active participation at all levels (including non-governmental organisations) as a prerequisite for the effective implementation of the programme.

Within the CARDS (*Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation*) programme, environment and natural resources are one of the priority cooperation sectors; the main modes of action are *institution building* and **trans-frontier and inter-regional projects** covering water and pollution issues. In 2000, within the Stability Pact, the ***Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme*** (REReP) was set up, in order to coordinate all action in the field of the environment in South-Eastern Europe. The programme supports mainly institutional reform and civil society initiatives, in order to create the necessary conditions for sustainable environmental management in the Region. Activities carried out are funded chiefly through CARDS, but they also have access to funds made available by the LIFE-Third Countries Programme and by bilateral donors.

The **LIFE-Third Countries** Programme is a branch of the Community LIFE programme, set up in 1992 as a financial instrument for the environment policy of the European Union. LIFE-TC is aimed at non-Union Countries bordering on the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea, other than pre-accession countries. The objective of the programme is to contribute to the establishment of skills and administrative structures needed in the environmental sector and to the development of environment policy and the related action programmes. The following are eligible: technical assistance projects that are of interest to the Community, that promote sustainable development at international, national or regional level or that provide solutions to major environmental problems

in the area they target. Priority is given to projects that promote forms of cooperation at trans-border, trans-national and regional level.

Considering the **Interreg III** European initiative within the Structural Fund context, where sub-state authorities (regional authorities in particular) take the lead role, the environment and sustainable development figure among the priority themes. In the Commission guidelines, environmental protection is mentioned as an issue belonging both to Interreg IIIA (cross-border cooperation) and to Interreg IIIB (transnational cooperation). All planning documents that involve Italy and the Mediterranean countries indicate environmental issues as priority themes. In particular, the following deserve mention: priority 1 (*Environmental protection and exploitation, culture and infrastructure of the cross-border territory*) of Interreg III A Italy/Adriatic; priority 2 (*Environment and health*) of Interreg IIIA Italy – Albania; priority 1 (*Sustainable development of the territory and social and economic cohesion*), priority 3 (*Promoting spatial development approaches and actions for social and economic cohesion*) and priority 4 (*Environment protection, resource management and risk prevention*) of Interreg III B Cades; priority 4 (*Development of assets and sustainable development*) and priority 5 (*Environment, use of resources and risk prevention*) of Interreg III B Western Mediterranean; priority 3 (*Integrated and sustainable management of cultural resources; exploitation of cultural heritage and natural landscape and prevention of risks*) of Interreg III B Archimed.

In Italy, the **Ministry of the Environment** participates in networks and carries out many international activities: of these, the recent (September 2004) inauguration of Medrec is worthy of mention, it is the Centre for the promotion of renewable energy in the Mediterranean, based in Tunis (set up with the collaboration of the Ministry of Industry and Energy and the National Agency for the Conservation of Energy in Tunis) and the *Pilot project on the rapid assessment of environmental and health risks in the Danube basin*, that involves Rumania, Hungary and Bulgaria. Moreover, the Ministry has guidance and surveillance powers over APAT (Agency for environmental protection and technical services), that carries out its scientific and technical activities of national interest for the protection of the environment, the safeguard of water resources and the defence of the soil and the land. APAT is an integral part of a network system, the System of Environmental Agencies, that includes 21 Regional Agencies (ARPA) and Provincial Agencies (APPA); the Agency promotes the strengthening of this system in the international cooperation context within which similar international agencies and institutions are present, with a particular focus on the whole Mediterranean area and the new EU members.

In order to carry out its development cooperation activities, the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** operates within the context of the Millenium objectives, among which figures the objective to “*guarantee the protection of the environment, by integrating the principles of sustainable development into national policies*”. In Eastern and Mediterranean Europe and in North Africa and Near and Middle East countries, the Ministry supports many projects relating to environmental protection, to water supply and management, to sustainable rural development, to urban environmental management (primarily in the field of water and waste disposal) and in North Africa, to fighting desertification.

Finally, **Law 84 of 2001**, aimed at regulating the forms of Italian participation in the process of stabilisation, reconstruction and development of the Countries in the Balkan area and **Law 212 of 1992**, in support of the introduction of structural reform and of action to foster the transition toward forms of market economy in Central and Eastern European Countries, constitute a significant opportunity for the sub-state Authorities in the Mediterranean to collaborate, in the environmental field too. Law 212 is administered by the Ministry of Productive Activities; the implementation of law 84 on the other hand, is shared by the Ministry of Foreign affairs (development cooperation and decentralised cooperation activities), the Ministry of Productive Activities (promotion and assistance for businesses) and the Ministry of the Environment that is the depositary of a fund for chemical, physical and radioactive pollution monitoring activities in the areas covered by this law.

## ANNEX 2

### ITALIAN DECENTRALISED COOPERATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT. THEMES AND INITIATIVES

Since the '90, the Italian sub-state Authorities have considerably increased their participation in national and international programmes for the protection of the environment and the promotion and the management of sustainable development in the Mediterranean. The projects presented here are a small sample of the national panorama of ongoing initiatives.

As for **integrated water management**, it is interesting to remember MEDCORE 2002-2005 (*Mediterranean Coast, River Ecosystems* – “From river catchment areas to the sea: a comparative and integrated approach to the ecology of Mediterranean coastal zones for sustainable management), an INCO-MED<sup>15</sup> programme in which various universities and agencies from Italy, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia take part. It is coordinated by the University of Florence and involves, among the countries on the south shore of the Mediterranean, the University of Tunis, the Agency for protection and management of coasts (the Tunisian Ministry of the Environment – APAL), the Universities of Rabat and Tetouan (Morocco), the University of Alexandria in Egypt, the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe, (CEDARE) in Cairo. The objective of the project is to assess the health and the vulnerability of the eco-systems of the coasts and of the areas adjacent to the Mediterranean area. It is a question of collating information and defining environmental and sustainability indicators that are so useful to local and central governments to ensure that their environmental policy choices are based on sound knowledge.

In the field of **integrated waste management**, the Marche region is involved in a series of initiatives in the Western Balkans, and in particular in Albania, which operate thanks to important synergies between Community programmes and national and international funds. The “Agency for integrated waste management in the Valona region” project, presented and approved in the context of the LIFE Community programme (co-funded by UNOPS under the human development programme PASARP) is aimed at setting up an Agency for waste management in the Valona region, by carrying out a feasibility study in order to find locations for a landfill and treatment plants, an essential instrument in order to progress along a path leading to waste management practices that are up to European Union standards. The project involves the municipalities of Himara, Saranda, Lukova (Valona region) and the municipality of Shjiak (Durazzo region).

The “Integrated waste management” project, 2004-2006 – aimed at Albania and Serbia-Montenegro – complements the previous one and was approved under the funds of Law 84/2001 for the reconstruction of the Balkans. The partners from the South include the Region and the Municipality of Durazzo (Albania), the Region and the Municipality of Valona (Albania), the Port of Bar (Serbia Montenegro), the Regional Agency for the Environment of Valona and the Regional Agency for the Environment of Durazzo; while the local partners include the AnconAmbiente S.p.A. services company. In this case too, the objective is to achieve a correct system for integrated waste management in Albania and in Bosnia thus contributing to improving the technical and financial planning skills of waste collection companies. Finally the “W.A.P. – Waste Management in Adriatic Ports”, project 2004-2006 – also aimed at Albania – aims at harmonising methods for planning and managing the waste of the Adriatic area ports, thus promoting a new culture, linked to the importance of selective collection, recovery and correct disposal of port waste. The objectives are also to disseminate social and ethical responsibility (standard SA8000) in the port area, to increase the prestige and the image of the Adriatic ports involved in the project as well as to create a network of ports that follows sustainable social and environmental management according to common guidelines. Among the partners from the south we find the municipalities of Himara,

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<sup>15</sup> INCO refers to the EU programme *Confirming the International role of Community research*, within the broader context of the EU international cooperation initiatives in the sector of *Research and Technological Development* (RTD), of which INCO-MED (*Cooperation with Mediterranean countries*) is one project.

Saranda, Lukova (Valona region), the municipalities of Shjiak (Durazzo region), the Valona Regional Environmental Agency for the environment and the Durazzo Regional Environmental Agency.

There is another important initiative in the field of integrated waste management: AMA Arab Environment Company (AAEC) - 2001, set up by the Municipal Environment Company (AMA S.p.A.) of Rome. The project is aimed at the Egyptian municipalities of Cairo and Dakahlia and its objective is to make waste collection and transport as well as street sweeping more effective, and to improve recycling capacity and the quality of recycled products. The initiative also includes the construction of a landfill to be managed in conformity with European Union standards, environmental awareness-creating action and staff training courses.

In the context of **management of coasts**, the project named Laboratorio Arcipelago is also worthy of mention, it was set up in Croatia by the Marche Region and is co-financed by the World Bank. The objective of this project, which is in the start-up phase, is to pave the way for a territorial partnership with the islands belonging to the Zadar and Sibenik Croat Counties, thus offering the authorities and local Croat social subjects a common methodology to plan sustainable development in the area. Here, the plan is to prepare and produce digital satellite maps of the archipelago (the anthropic and the natural systems), to promote two computerised stations in Kuglica (Zadar County) and in Klarin (Sibenik County), managed by local NGOs, and to organise a workshop with the archipelago local authorities and social groups, dedicated to identifying possible common projects.

In the field of **sustainable rural development and the fight against desertification**, we must mention the Mediterritage project (*Valorisation économique du patrimoine naturel et culturel des montagnes méditerranéennes*) in the context of INTERREG IIIC, for which the Calabria Region is the leader. The objectives of the project are to foster, in the partner communities, a management system for mountainous territories that prevents their degradation and enhances their resources, by creating new economic activities and jobs in the agro-pastoral, naturalistic and/or cultural sectors and favouring an approach to local integrated and shared development that involves the village communities. The local partners are the Regional Forest Department of Souk Ahras (Algeria), the Regional Forest Department of Marrakech (Morocco), the Regional Forest Department of Mugla (Turkey), the Valona Region in Albania, the Region of Western Macedonia and the Region of Vratsa (Bulgaria). The final goal to be achieved is to allow the small local communities to take part directly in a true North-South, East-West transnational cooperation process.

Another worthy initiative is the Desertnet project (within INTERREG IIIB, MEDOCC), relating to the study, the monitoring and the lasting management of areas threatened with desertification, in the Mediterranean basin, led by the University of Sassari. The objectives of the project (already completed) were to rationalise the information and the technical-scientific experience acquired and processed for chosen areas; to create a platform of services and a network of pilot-activities in order to contribute towards setting up a homogeneous system for the exchange of data/information and for the control of desertification processes.

Although the territorial vocation of the initiative is limited to the European Mediterranean, among the various partners involved we also find Tunisia (and in particular the Institut des Régions Arides), as the third country associated to the project, with which fruitful scientific collaboration has been set up. Desertnet II – that the University of Sassari intends to propose soon for new EU funding – would extend the list of partners on the southern banks of the Mediterranean to Morocco, Algeria and the SSO (the Sahara and Sahel Observatory)<sup>16</sup>, based in Tunis.

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.unesco.org/oss/v\\_fr/presentation.htm](http://www.unesco.org/oss/v_fr/presentation.htm)

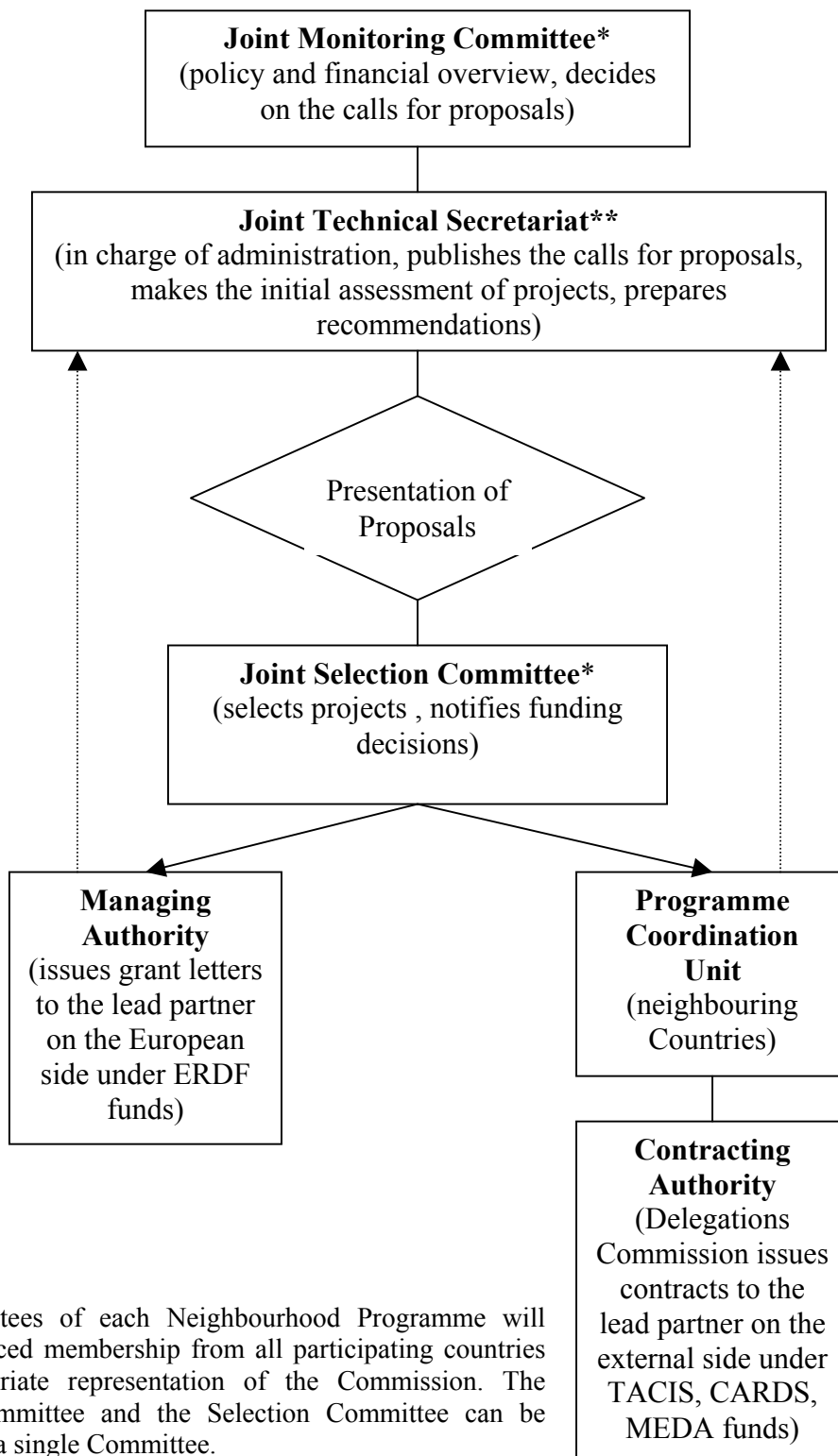
In the context of **safeguarding/protecting natural resources and biodiversity**, we must mention the Piemonte Region project, “Parco industriale di Ain Johra”, financed by the Ministry of Productive activities (law 212/92). The objectives of the project, whose partners in the South are the Regions of Rabat-Salè-Zemmour-Zaer, are to meet the needs of potential businesses, in terms of infrastructure (telecommunications and road networks, water and energy supply, land reclaiming and waste treatment) on the one hand and on the other, to meet the needs expressed by the families of the workers living in the Park, by offering a variety of services that improve the quality of life.

In the field of **sustainable urban development**, the project worthy of mention is ENVIMED II, coordinated by the City of Rome and funded under the European Commission programme LIFE III. The project was set up within the MEDCITIES network, to whom the general coordination has been entrusted, whereas technical assistance activities have been contracted out to a number of bodies. The partners in the South are the municipalities of Larnaca and Limassol (Cyprus), Tripoli (Libya), Sousse (Tunisia), Oran (Algeria) and Haifa (Israel).

Project launch activities were organised in all the partner cities. The city of Rome took part in the project through the Agency for sustainable development in the Mediterranean (Ecomed), and its department for waste management and environmental protection. The project is made up of two pilot sub-projects: the setting up of two telematic machines in Sousse and Limassol that provide the public with an information service on the environment and sustainable development (in particular waste collection and the care of green areas) and technical assistance for solid urban waste management.

In the same field again, there is another project worthy of mention: MED’ACT 2003-2005, *Mediterranean, Europe, Development, Actions of Cities and Towns* (under the European Commission MEDA programme), whose leader is the city of Bordeaux, and more precisely, the sub-project called “Sviluppo Urbano Sostenibile”, which has two separate stages, the first one is coordinated by the Municipality of Rome and is aimed at the cities of Sfax, Mahdia and Bosra (Tunisia), the second by the Municipality of Genova and is aimed at the cities of Sidi Abdellah (Algeria) and of Amioun (Lebanon). The project belongs to the more general context of creating room for dialogue, exchange and cooperation among cities, however its specific objectives are to foster the exchange of *best practices* to promote sustainable urban development, to favour environmental protection processes thanks to an approach aimed at the prevention of environmental risks, at sustainable management of natural resources and at marine waste recycling.

**ANNEX 3**  
**NEIGHBOURHOOD PROGRAMME PROCEDURE AND INSTITUTIONS**



\* The Committees of each Neighbourhood Programme will include a balanced membership from all participating countries and an appropriate representation of the Commission. The Monitoring Committee and the Selection Committee can be unified to form a single Committee.

\*\* The Secretariat is appointed by the Managing Authority (for member States) and by the Programme Coordination unit (for the neighbouring Countries)