

THE ITALIAN “ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN”¹ INITIATIVE

The environment and sustainable development in the Mediterranean are a strategic theme for Italy, the European union and all neighbouring countries. The natural resources of this area are very delicate and subject to growing anthropic pressure, are a public good to be defended, preserved and enhanced.

As the Rio de Janeiro and the Johannesburg world summits stated, sustainable development must be pursued at all levels: international, national and sub-state levels, according to a bottom-up methodology (Agenda MED 21). It is along these lines that the commitment of the Regions, local authorities and the various subjects in the Italian territories to cooperate with sub-state Authorities has grown in these last years.

At the same time, the European Union launched the new *Neighbourhood* Policy that provides for a more important role for cross-border and trans-national cooperation among sub-state Authorities in view of creating a common space of peace and sustainable development. In 2005, the first MEDA and CARDS *Neighbourhood* Programmes for the Mediterranean area and the western Balkans should get off the ground.

It is in this context that the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the agreement of the Regions, initiated the “Environment and sustainable development in the Mediterranean” action.

The objective of the initiative is to promote the process of defining concrete projects that can be activated in the short term thanks to resources made available by the European Union through the new *Neighbourhood* Programmes and by the Italian Government².

In order to achieve this goal, the Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale has been entrusted by the Directorate General European Integration of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to work with the Italian Regions as well as with the sub-state Authorities of the neighbouring Mediterranean countries and in the western Balkans, with the agreement of the central Authorities, to identify project contents and partnerships on environment and sustainable development issues.

- The first phase in October, focus on increasing the awareness and the involvement of the Regions in order to collect the first indications on interesting projects and partnerships.
- In November, missions to neighbouring countries will be organised, in close contact with and following the recommendations of the Regions, and with the agreement of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to increase the awareness and the involvement of local partners in the preparation of projects within the *Neighbourhood* Programme.
- Workshops and services will be set up in order to draft project files that will involve sub-state institutional partners, technical partners as well as partners belonging to civil society in Italy and in neighbouring countries. These files will refer mainly to the priorities indicated by the European Commission in the MEDA and the CARDS *Neighbourhood Programme* (sustainable rural, urban, coastal, transport and energy development).
- Finally, an international seminar will be organised in Basilicata on the 14th and 15th December 2004, in order to discuss and, if possible, finalise the project ideas identified for presentation within the indicated financial channels. Follow-up activities will be organised in order to guarantee the concrete presentation of the proposed projects.

¹ In this project “Mediterranean” includes also the western Balkan countries

² About 28 million euros of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ project aimed at supporting cooperation of Italian and Mediterranean sub-state Authorities.

Therefore, as a first step, **we ask you to communicate to us:**

- interesting projects that are under way, being started up or being prepared (briefly indicating countries, local authority partners, thematic area or content, involvement of actors on the territory)

For further information and clarifications:

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By way of guidance for the identification of projects on sustainable development, it is possible to define as priority contents of territorial partnerships in the Mediterranean space, three main sets of themes and project contexts to be covered in dedicated workshops.

Workshops	Themes	Sub-state governments and subjects on the territory	Project contexts
OCHRE WORKSHOP RURAL CONTEXT	- Sustainable rural development (drought and desertification; sustainable agriculture; responsible tourism and parks, energy)	- Regions and rural municipalities, - Agencies and service centres for agricultural development - Park authorities - Farmers' organisations and environmentalist associations, - Universities	- Development of the Leader MEDA programme - Neighbourhood programmes on rural development
GREEN WORKSHOP URBAN ENVIRONMENT	- Environmental resources' management - Sustainable industrial development - Peri-urban agricultural - Eco-responsible cultural tourism - Green urban areas - Transport and energy	- Regions and cities - Agencies and service centres sustainable local development - Citizen and environmental organisations, industrial representative bodies, - Universities	- Development of Agenda 21 at local level via Medcities, MedAct, ...networks - Neighbourhood programmes on sustainable urban development
BLUE WORKSHOP MARINE ENVIRONMENT	- Integrated development of coast and coastal towns - Insular systems - Fishing, aquaculture, diversification of activities - Parks - Maritime transport and harbour services management	- Regions and cities - Harbour agencies and service centres for the sustainable development of the coasts - Park authorities - Citizen and environmental organisations, - Universities	- Neighbourhood programmes on the sustainable development of the coasts and coastal towns
RAINBOW WORKSHOP	- protection of biodiversity - development of information and data, indicators and provisions, as uniform or harmonised as possible among the partners (institution building)	- Regions and cities - Harbour agencies and service centres for the sustainable develop. of the coasts - Park authorities - Citizen and environmental organisations, Universities	- Neighbourhood programmes for the protection of biodiversity and for information and of indicator standardisation