The global market for tourism is expected to continue to grow over the next several decades. According to the World Tourism Organisation, international tourism will increase from over 600 million arrivals in the late 1990’s to about 2 billion arrivals in the year 2020. In Europe, tourism is concentrated in the Mediterranean area (45% of arrivals) and in western Europe (35%), and less so in northern and eastern Europe (collectively 11%). International arrivals in Europe will double from 360 million in 1997 to about 720 million, with increasing growth rates in central and eastern Europe (+ 4.8% per year) and in eastern Mediterranean Europe (+4.6% per year). In 2020, nine out of ten tourists will still be European.¹

In the overall paradigm of sustainable development, tourism can be defined through a wide array of subjects, issues, and interests:
- **Actors**: tourists (degree of satisfaction, behaviour, etc…); local populations (work, identity, well-being).
- **Subjects**: tourism industry and economy (employment, added value, local multipliers); culture (heritage conservation, variety); nature and the environment (energy consumption and materials, biodiversity, environmental quality).

The needs of future generations, along with environmental, social, and cultural carrying capacities are setting the quality and limits of growth.


[www.eco-tip.org](http://www.eco-tip.org)
All activities related to tourism must be sustainable, and respect the environment, the local and global economies, the social aspects of individual communities, and cultural identity. This means that tourism must be ecologically sustainable in the long-term, economically feasible, and acceptable from both an ethical and social point of view.

Sustainable tourism must be integrated into the natural, cultural, and human environment. Tourism activities should have an acceptable impact on natural resources, biodiversity, and the capacity of the natural environment to absorb all impacts and waste.

Tourism activities (including planning activities, the construction of infrastructure, and the management of tourism services) have a significant impact on the environment and on biological diversity, and must therefore undergo specific environmental impact assessments.

Tourism must assess its own impacts on the cultural heritage and on the traditional activities of the communities it affects. Acknowledgement and respect of local communities, and support for their identity, culture, and interests must play a key role in the development of tourism policies, opportunities, and strategic projects.

The adequate development of the various tourism-related activities can strengthen local economies, and thus regional and national ones as well, by employing local human and material resources.

Tourism activities must respect the environmental characteristics of the area in which they take place.

Any policy or project that aims to develop sustainable tourism must effectively improve the quality of life of host populations, and must have a positive effect on cultural identities.

According to World Tourism Organisation data, the Mediterranean area is the world’s leading tourist attraction. It is one of the areas with the highest anthropic pressure cause by tourism (about 180 million visitors per year).

High demand for land, and rapid changes in land use, often have negative consequences on the environment, on local traditions, and on cultural identities. It is therefore very important to carefully plan and efficiently manage tourism-related activities, and to exchange best practices in order to be able to conduct feasibility studies before embarking on community related strategies.

This is the reason why an increasing number of international organisations and national governments recognise the importance of adequate management in order to reduce the negative impacts of tourism.

In the wake of these trends, many firms involved in the tourism industry have responded positively to the task of developing sustainable forms of tourism. The new tourism industry, through the creation of self-regulatory instruments, new specific legislation, and activities that respect the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of tourism, seeks to create a new code of behaviour that respects sustainable tourism.

The implementation of projects to develop sustainable tourism requires feedback and self-monitoring, in order to guarantee a more sustainable quality of life.

A network can have such a function, and it can facilitate the exchange of ideas, know-how, and results.

It is therefore clear that traditional approaches to tourism economics, planning, management, and sustainability must be widened, and that tourism must be understood within a wider framework that includes general economic policies, socio-economic development, and cultural changes. Despite the fact that most analyses and debates are still being held at the national level, due to the on-going globalisation process the next phase of Mediterranean tourism will require a unitary dimension. A restructured Mediterranean tourism, molded by alliances and cooperation, which replaces the sterile and ferocious competition between countries of the past, is more likely to succeed on the global market.
The rediscovery of the value of the protection of local landscapes, cultures, traditions, and historical identities goes hand-in-hand with the European-wide need for opportunities, infrastructure, and places in which environmental quality is seen as a way to enjoy better vacations and protect the environment by acting responsibly.

There is a strong need to intensify efforts to sensitize public opinion through adequate communication and comparison tools, as well as through the circulation of information on best practices among the various subjects involved. Tourism-related activities require careful analysis on the part of public administrations, which must be involved in both the supply side – such as sustainable tourism production models – and in terms of regulating resource use and the relationships between all stakeholders.

Regional-level institutions are particularly important, since they are the public institutions best adapted to achieving the necessary operational convergence between the national/global level and local communities, and between the various public and private stakeholders involved in defining and creating the supply of sustainable tourism activities.

On March 21 and 22, 2005, Formez-Caimed, in collaboration with the Bocconi University Master’s in Tourism Economics, is organizing an initial meeting of Western Mediterranean institutions, operators, and experts working on the integration of Mediterranean tourism, with a focus on sustainability and cooperation between the countries on the shores of the Mediterranean. The meeting will focus on the Mediterranean regions of Italy (Liguria, Umbria, Tuscany, Sardinia, Latium, Campania, Basilicata, Calabria, and Sicily), France, Spain, Portugal, Malta, Cyprus, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya. The meeting will be held in Italy at Formez headquarters in Naples (Arco Felice di Pozzuoli).

The goal of this initiative is to activate a system that will gather existing best practices and projects in sustainable tourism in the western Mediterranean, in order to create a single network accessible to all.

The programme is broken down into four main sessions:

- **I session** – Sustainability and integration;
- **II session** – Best practices in history and culture;
- **III session** – Best practices in the environmental, economic, and social fields;
- **IV session** – New programmes and shared projects.

This meeting aims to identify the necessary opportunities and requirements for creating a stable network to support sustainable tourism. This initiative could be extended to other areas of the Mediterranean, such as the Adriatic and Aegean Seas, as a follow-up to other meetings that would use the same template as the present one.
Secretariat:

Regina De Carvalho

Formez, Research & Development
Viale Campi Flegrei, 34
80078 Arco Felice di Pozzuoli, NA
ITALY
Tel. 00 39 081 5250411
Fax. 00 39 081 5250312
Mail: decarvalhoregina@tiscali.it