

Training Course in “Sustainable Development of Agricultural, Environmental and Rural Systems”

DESCRIPTION AND STRATEGY - Sustainability in agricultural, rural and coastal areas has at least three interrelated dimensions: the ecological, the social and the economic dimension. Just referring to the economic dimension WTO rules do not allow any more protection policies to intensify production, while sustainability coupled with multi-functionality may represent an occasion to multiply additional source of income (organic and natural farming, agritourism, recreational use of parks, and the like) promoting as well employment in rural areas. This approach would also better answer to the dynamic of consumers' demand. Present societies, both in the West and in the East, are looking for safe food, high quality products, wide range of variety, better protection of environment, preservation of rural and coastal landscapes, and serious concern is mounting over the animal welfare. For high quality it is clear that one should accept to pay the higher price and also to compensate farmers for their active role in preserving public goods.

CONTENTS - The Training Course seeks: 1) to offer a deep analysis of the theoretical, legal and operational aspects related to planning and management of agro-environmental systems, and, on this basis, 2) to develop sound methodologies for an active policy of sustainable development in the rural and coastal areas of the Adriatic-Ionian Basin.

INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND INTER-REGIONAL APPROACH – The Training Course, linking the scientific community of the different countries involved in the Ionian-Adriatic Initiative (but also other countries may be involved in a second stage), aims to approach the sustainable development of agricultural, rural and coastal areas with an interdisciplinary perspective. The main issues relate to sustainable development will involve demography, environment degradation, income and production, the role of institutions at local, national and international level. Moreover, each Country/Focal Point involved will have a specialisation.

TARGET AUDIENCE- The Training Course is addressed to young fellows (having already a three years degree) as well as officers (already working in local or national agencies) belonging to the countries of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative. These “students” will be aiming at careers prospects requiring a high level of competence in managing and planning agricultural-environmental systems at various levels in local, national, international governmental and non-governmental organisations.

PROGRAMME - The Course is made up of 60 university credits. Each credit consists of 25 hours. Credits related to lectures and seminars are divided into three modalities: “face to face” (4 hours), e-learning (6 hours at the focal point) and individual study (15 hours). For fieldwork and the final dissertation 1 credit consists in 25 hours divided as follow: 2 hours with tutor and 23 hours individual work/study. A detailed program is being discussed.

STATUS OF THE PROJECT - The project has started on February 2002.

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