



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**



UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.124/Inf.8
23 April 1997

Original: ENGLISH

MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Second Meeting of the Mediterranean
Commission on Sustainable Development

Palma de Majorca, Spain, 6-8 May 1997

**PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE THEME:
"(Eco) Tourism"**

Task Managers: Spain, EOAEN and Egypt

Introduction

Tourism is one of the primary activities for the economic and social development of many countries.

Tourism has to contribute towards sustainable development, guaranteeing that it becomes integrated into the natural, cultural and human setting, and having to respect the delicate balance that characterises many tourist destinations. It therefore becomes necessary to formulate strategies and projects on tourism that ensure that local and national economies develop at the same time as respecting the quality of the environment.

Source countries of tourists must, together with receiver countries, take responsibility for joint action with the aim of making needs and resources compatible from the viewpoint of sustainable development.

Development and field of application

As part of the specific activities that have to inform the object of this action, the following should be highlighted:

- (a) Tourist destinations
- (b) Impact and consequences that tourism creates on the territory, the population and the environment of receiver countries.
- (c) Elements of the tourist industry itself.

In short, the framework of application would be as follows:

A. Tourist Destinations

Proposals and measures will be focused on the conservation and improvement of the territory, the environment, protection of biodiversity, social integration and defence of the cultural and ethnographic heritage.

Account will be taken among others of the Directives set by the MED 21 Programme, the V Action Programme of the European Union, the Lanzarote Charter on Sustainable Tourism of 1995, the Casablanca Charter on Tourism in the Mediterranean of 1995, the Istanbul Conference on Habitats of 1996, la Déclaration euro-méditerranéenne sur le Tourisme dans le développement en Méditerranée, le proposition de le Commission des Communautés Europeennes au Conseil concernant un premier programme pluriannuel en faveur du tourisme européen "Philoxenia" (1997-2000), as well as all that considered in the 21 Programme itself and the Berlin Declaration on Biodiversity and Tourism of 1997. Account will also be taken, as appropriate, of the proposals arising from the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS, in June 1997), besides other conclusions and recommendations referring to the presentation of the final document.

1. Consolidated destinations:

- (1a) Promote the implementation of territorial environmental management systems.

(1b) Programmes for tourism reclassification and regeneration of degraded areas.

2. Emerging destinations:

(2a) Programmes for local populations on awareness raising and training regarding tourism

(2b) Environmental impact studies, particularly on all actions on the territory that have a marked effect on the environment: infrastructures (waste management, transport, sewerage systems, energy, etc.), equipping. Similarly, special attention to maintenance of biodiversity.

B. Impact on the Territory, the environment and the population

Tourism is an essential activity for the social and economic development of many peripheral regions cut off from the normal communication and development corridors.

In these countries, high environmental and biodiversity values frequently coincide with the need for economic development, a situation that can easily lead to over-exploitation of resources and a decrease of biodiversity.

1. Impact on the territory

In order to be able to focus on these problems properly, studies already begun on the load capacity of tourist destinations must be continued. These studies should take into account the starting situations and the conclusions and recommendations of the Workshop on Carrying Capacity Assessment for Tourism in Mediterranean Coastal Areas, recently held in Split as part of the Priority Actions Programme.

2. Social and economic aspects

At the regional and international level, to foster technical and economic collaboration between source countries and receiver countries of tourism. For this, source countries must be aware of the fact that they are partly responsible for the problems that occur in receiver countries. The solution to these problems will only be possible by means of a joint effort.

3. Ecotourism

Promote the designing of programme that consider non-disturbance to the integrity of the ecosystem and recommendations for adjoining areas. These programmes will offer incentives for economic opportunities that permit natural resources to be conserved and will likewise benefit the local population.

4. Cultural and ethnological aspects

It is essential that pressure from visitors in tourist areas is not so excessive that the area exceeds its tourist possibilities and gives rise to problems regarding the actual cultural and ethnological values of the receiver countries.

- 4.1 Promote cultural tourism programmes as a means for recovering and rehabilitating the historical and artistic heritage, together with cultural exchange.
- 4.2 Encourage the necessary means for preserving them from deteriorating on account of the fragility of these historical and artistic elements as a result of excess pressure from tourists.

C. Tourist Industry

It is important to take action on the centres and facilities that receive tourists. For this, measures will have to be established for involving operators in the sector in continual environmental improvement.

Centres and Facilities

1. Already existing:
 - (1a) Promote the implementation of environmental management systems so that they can be subsequently applied.
 - (1b) Publication of guides, manuals on good habits, courses and seminars.
 - (1c) Promote research into the application of new technologies to the tourist sector and encourage their implementation so that facilities become less polluting and more efficient.
 - (1d) Programmes on tourism regeneration: rehabilitation, sewerage systems, waste management and recovery of obsolete centres and facilities.
2. New facilities
 - (2a) Designing of preliminary environmental impact studies
 - (2b) Promote the application of measures that integrate tourist activity into urban development and territorial planning from the viewpoint of sustainability. Place special emphasis on the integration of new facilities into the landscape.
3. General measures

Preparation of an environmental code of conduct for tourists.

DEFINITION OF THE WORK METHODOLOGY

The work could be performed in the following phases:

1. Compilation of document
2. Detection of gaps
3. Drawing up of relevant reports or studies on those topics considered essential for preparing this document
4. Seminars
5. Presentation of the final document
6. Approval of proposals

1. Compilation of documents

The compilation of documents will have to be done for before 30 September 1997.

The Spanish Institute of Tourism Studies places the collection of its tourist documentation centre at the disposal of the PAM centres, and also offers whatever technical collaboration that might be needed.

2. Detection of gaps

During the third meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (France), a small group made up of the leaders and the CAR, along with other interested members, could define the existing gaps and agree to conduct the necessary studies so that the final work can materialise.

3. Drawing up of relevant reports or studies on those topics considered essential for preparing this document

Depending on the definition and field of application presented, in the initial assessment and in collaboration with the CAR, the leaders could finalise the following studies and reports on the stated dates:

- A. Destinations

1. Consolidated destinations (Spain, 30 September 1998)
2. Emerging destinations (.....)

- B. Impact on the territory, the environment and the population

1. Impact on tourist areas
* Continuation of the load capacities studies (CAR +

2. Social and economic aspects (CAR +)
3. Ecotourism (CAR +)
4. Cultural and ethnological aspects (CAR +)

C. Tourist industry

1. Existing centres and facilities (Spain, 30 September 1998)
2. New facilities (CAR +)
3. General measures (CAR +)
4. Seminars

It considered worth-while holding the following meeting.

November 1998	Seminar on consolidated destinations and already existing facilities of the tourist industry.
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Funding: Spain + PAM

Date to be decided	Seminar on emerging destinations, ecotourism, cultural and ethnological tourism, new facilities
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Funding:

Date to be decided	Seminar on code of good behaviour for tourists
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Funding:

5. Presentation of the final document

For May 1999, the leaders must have concluded the final report in collaboration with the CAR so that it can be presented to the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development to be held that year. For this meeting, the leaders will present certain recommendation proposals for discussion.

6. Approval of proposals

The Commission on Sustainable Development will draw up the recommendation proposals that it considers relevant so that they can be adopted in the meeting of signatory parties to the Convention.