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Sectoral Integration of Biodiversity in Italy

Contents

1. Introduction

Italy reported[1] on safeguarding biodiversity in the plans and programmes of various sectors, including rural development and agriculture, forests, fishing, quarries and mines, tourism, human health policies related to biodiversity, food security; international Biodiversity Agreements at the global, regional and European level, such as global biodiversity tools, regional transnational biodiversity tools, European and pan-European tools; other conventions affecting biodiversity, including the other Rio conventions, other global and regional transnational tools that affect biodiversity; biodiversity in other national and sub-national strategies and programmes, including national sustainable development plans and activities, local action for environmental sustainable development.

Safeguarding biodiversity in the plans and programmes of various sectors

2. Rural development and agriculture

The National Strategic Plan (NSP) for Rural Development 2007-2012 approved in July 2007 formally provides the framework for planning of agricultural and forest measures. Transferral of competences concerning agriculture and forests in Italy generated land diversification of planning, which basically occurs through Rural Development Plans (RDP) for 2007-2013 and specific Regional Forest Plans and Programmes (PFR), often drawn up to support RDP.

Biodiversity and landscape conservation are two of the four environmental priorities identified by the Italian National Strategy Plan (NSP) for Rural Development. Three specific actions are highlighted: 1) reduction of negative environmental impacts; 2) mitigation of negative environmental impacts; and, 3) exploitation of the environmental function of agriculture. The strategy identifies, within the latter group, some key actions specifically aimed at maintaining and/or creating those landscape features which can be termed 'farmland features'. These refer particularly to: 1) conserving landscape and its specific features; 2) reducing habitat fragmentation ; and, 3) protecting soil (i.e. terraces).

The NSP recommends action for high nature value agro-forestry areas, particularly protected areas (including Natura 2000 sites) and less favoured areas, aimed at: a) conserving and exploiting seminatural habitats, including natural structural features (such as hedges, rows of trees, grassy and wooded strips, ponds); b) developing ecological corridors by strengthening crucial points of the ecological network and ensuring greater connection between protected areas by safeguarding and diffusing natural features (rows, hedges and copses) and manmade features (e.g. ditches, small dry walls); and, c) restoring natural habitats and adopting appropriate eco-compatible agricultural practices. More specifically, it has been suggested that planning and management policies for protected areas should be adopted over large areas, so as to take into account the dynamics of ecosystems and their functional relationships,

[1] Italy (2009). Convention on Biological Diversity Fourth National Report, Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea, 31/03/2009, 135 pp.

and to integrate their management with that of land and ecosystems outside protected areas. If appropriate measures were actually developed, they would be likely to benefit many farmland features, particularly features such as hedges and other linear features that improve habitat connectivity.

Depending on the regional context, the key actions, as mentioned above, can be implemented through different measures provided by Axis 2, particularly: agri-environmental payments; support for non-productive investments; LFA payments; Natura 2000 payments; afforestation, forestenvironment payments.

Biodiversity actions contained in RDPs are also indirectly implemented via Axis 1 (Improving competitiveness in agriculture and forestry), Axis 3 and Axis 4 (Improving the quality of life in rural areas and diversifying rural economy and Leader approach) .

In order to improve action effectiveness, the NSP allows for integration of measures (included in a single Axis or as a combination of measures from different Axes). Integration can be realized around a specific strategic theme, such as environmental conservation, which may then be differentiated according to the specific objective, e.g. biodiversity or soil.

Table 1- RDP funds and percentages per Axis and Measure

Measure/description	FEASR Total	Overall public spending	% Programme	% per Measure per Axis
111 Vocational training and information actions	101.183.462,00	214.305.196,00	1,3%	3,3%
112 Setting up of young farmers 370.618.703,00	798.457.403,00	4,8%	12,4%	
113 Early retirement	28.555.304,00	59.225.909,00	0,4%	0,9%
114 Use of advisory services	118.284.594,00	241.802.895,00	1,5%	3,8%
115 Setting up of farm management	15.593.900,00	29.900.366,00	0,2%	0,5%
121 Modernisation of agricultural holdings	1.117.257.025,00	2.356.444.413,00	14,2%	36,6%
122 Improving the economic value of forests	103.453.567,00	220.701.909,00	1,3%	3,4%
123 Adding value to agricultural and forestry products	571.002.146,00	1.194.348.372,00	7,2%	18,6%
124 Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies	70.700.574,00	151.980.527,00	0,9%	2,4%
125 improving and developing infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry	361.543.935,00	719.038.131,00	4,3%	11,2%
126 Restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters	20.597.841,00	46.323.945,00	0,3%	0,7%
131 Adapting to demanding standards based on Community legislation	26.331.215,00	54.604.313,00	0,3%	0,8%
132 Suppoting farmers who participate in food quality schemes	78.561.090,00	164.156.149,00	1,0%	2,6%
133 Information and promotion activities	87.369.041,00	183.223.805,00	1,1%	2,8%
Total axis 1	3.071.052.397,00	6.434.513.333,00	38,8%	100,0%
211 Natural handicap payments to farmers in mountain areas	387.917.724,00	815.990.299,00	4,9%	11,7%
212 Payments to farmers in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas	128.138.109,00	265.671.522,00	1,6%	3,8%
213 Natura 2000 payments and payments linked to Directive 2000/60/EC	10.713.567,00	23.121.744,00	0,1%	0,3%
214 Agri-environmental payments	1.914.686.852,00	3.709.709.043,00	22,3%	53,1%
215 Animal welfare payments	131.648.294,00	290.386.547,00	1,7%	4,2%
216 Support for non-productive investments	124.156.906,00	236.713.531,00	1,4%	3,4%
221 First afforestation of agricultural land	403.390.847,00	750.301.637,00	4,5%	10,7%

222 First establishment of agroforestry systems on agricultural land	4.873.111,00	8.186.161,00	0,0%	0,1%
223 First afforestation of non-agricultural land	84.362.451,00	132.400.933,00	0,8%	1,9%
224 Natura 2000 payments	6.285.091,00	13.057.025,00	0,1%	0,2%
225 Forest-environment payments	22.447.681,00	44.048.373,00	0,3%	0,6%
226 Restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions	233.655.351,00	431.690.963,00	2,6%	6,2%
227 Non-productive investments	136.602.569,00	260.173.209,00	1,6%	3,7%
Total Axis 2	3.588.878.553,00	6.981.450.987,00	42,0%	100,0%
311 Measures to diversify the rural economy	285.207.274,00	588.042.742,00	3,5%	41,6%
312 Creating and developing micro-enterprises	47.414.068,00	90.880.669,00	0,5%	6,4%
313Encouragment of tourism activities	59.727.895,00	118.574.971,00	0,7%	8,4%
321 Basic services for the economy and rural population	97.024.677,00	196.762.200,00	1,2%	13,9%
322 Village renewal and development	106.758.127,00	207.208.652,00	1,2%	14,7%
323 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage	78.415.188,00	158.886.635,00	1,0%	11,2%
331 Training and information	17.649.147,00	34.260.145,00	0,2%	2,4%
341 Skills-acquisition and animation to implement local development strategy	9.524.550,00	19.521.705,00	0,1%	1,4%
Total Axis 3	701.720.926,00	1.414.137.719,00	8,5%	100,0%
411 Local development strategies. Competitiveness	43.381.722,00	94.094.898,00	0,6%	7,0%
412 Local development strategies. Environment/land	36.824.940,00	74.473.504,00	0,4%	5,5%
413 Local development strategies. Quality of life	444.725.592,00	885.112.059,00	5,3%	65,8%
421 Implementing cooperation projects	45.727.686,00	91.644.460,00	0,6%	6,8%
431 Managing local action group, acquiring competences and animating territory pursuant to Article 59	102.728.066,00	200.646.916,00	1,2%	14,9%
Total Axis 4	673.388.006,00	1.345.971.837,00	8,1%	100,0%
511 Technical assistance	215.510.118,00	428.400.788,00	2,6%	100,0%
Total Axis 5	215.510.118,00	428.400.788,00	2,6%	100,0%
Overall total	8.250.550.000,00	16.604.474.664,00	100,0%	100,0%

Source:MIPAAF

Rural Development Programmes are funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) with joint funding from the State. At the national level, measures that may positively affect biodiversity (Axis 2) have received 42% of overall funding. Considerable variation can be seen at the regional level – from 20% for Liguria to 69% for Valle d'Aosta – due to the varying importance attributed by regional governments with respect to environmental integration.

At the national level, the National Rural Network (NRN) 2007-2007 managed by the Ministry for Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies and funded by EAFRD aims to establish an important opportunity within rural development to better integrate actions concerning the competitiveness of agriculture, forestry and the environment (biodiversity, safeguarding waters, climate change) and those focussing on the quality of life and economic diversification, reinforcing its effectiveness.

The general objectives of the NRN – including in relation to protecting biodiversity – may be summarized as follows:

• Improving national and regional governance of environmental policies;

• Reinforcing national and regional planning and management abilities in favour of biodiversity;

• Encouraging a process to diffuse information and knowledge regarding planning and the dynamics in rural areas related to biodiversity.

With regard to agriculture, in view of the obvious direct impact of agricultural practices on biodiversity, the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies (MIPAAF) published the "National Plan for biodiversity of agricultural interest" in February 2008. This Plan stresses that local varieties can only be conserved in the bioterritory, using traditional local rural techniques, in an extremely close relationship based on reciprocal dependency between those carrying out "ex situ" conservation and those carrying out "in situ" conservation.

The Plan is based on analyzing the strengths and weaknesses in plant and animal resource management. It directs all available resources towards conserving agricultural genetic diversity to thereby effectively restore most of the lost or endangered biodiversity on a territory to safeguard the environment, sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Finally, this Plan identifies priority initiatives to implement in the medium-long term at the national level:

• Defining reference quality standards, risks of extinction or genetic erosion;

• Identifying common index terms;

• Identifying, assessing and experimenting "in situ" conservation systems for local varieties (local farmer networks) and relative national guidelines;

• Defining a common procedure for identifying and characterizing indigenous genetic resources of agricultural interest;

• Defining general and agreed guidelines to valorise local varieties and re-introducing these – where possible – to the territory, above all those at risk of extinction;

• Implementing communication in order to encourage awareness of genetic resources and ensure synergies among the various territories involved.

Numerous initiatives have also been adopted to implement international regulations, such as:

• Actions to safeguard national animal and plant genetic heritage (MIPAAF) with the Council for Research and Experimentation in Agriculture (CRA) and the Consortium for Experimenting, Divulging and Applying Innovative Biotechniques (ConSDABI);

• Conserving forest genetic heritage, coordinated by the State Forestry Department;

• Numerous initiatives regarding both legislation and research and protection for indigenous genetic resources of agricultural, zootechny and forestry interest carried out by the Regions and Autonomous Provinces.

In addition to rural development measures, a number of interesting actions to conserve genetic resources ex situ are now operational in Italy. These include the activity carried out by MIPAF Experimental Institutes, which conserve over 350 species totalling over 21,000 accessions.

According to the Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea, at least 15 institutions operate in Italy and conserve over 69,000 accession of cultivated species and their wild relatives. Seed conservation is widely practiced in relation to grass species, whereas fruit species are mainly conserved in collection fields. Ex situ conservation of animals of zootechny interest mainly involves cryoconservation of genetic material.

Italy also actively participates in actions coordinated at the European level on this matter. As part of the European Agricultural Biodiversity Plan, 17 projects jointly funded by the European Commission commenced in 2007, which implement the measures indicated in this plan, defined according to Regulation (EC) 870/04. These projects last 4 years and involve collecting, characterizing and cataloguing plant and animal genetic resources and project partners and public and private subjects that have promoted the various initiatives jointly funded by EU diffusing information. Italy participates in 15 projects via numerous research centres, universities and foundations, 6 of which are coordinated by an Italian organization. The overall cost of these projects is around 19 million Euros, with joint Community funding of 45% on average.

3. Forests

Rural development policies are also responsible for forestry policies; in fact most of the resources available for this sector derive from Pillar II of the PAC.

Forestry measures are planned as part of the National Strategic Plan (NSP) for Rural Development and specific Regional Forestry Plans and Programmes (RFP); these are often drawn up to support Rural Development Plans.

The forestry measures (www.reterurale.it) implemented by Regions and A.P. involve a wide range of actions funded in various ways and comprise requirements relating to the beneficiaries and priority areas for action specified differently. This situation derives from the specific natures found in regions that which may define different priorities, thereby making comparison of the actions planned to protect biodiversity and landscapes on a systematic basis difficult and highlighting scarce horizontal connection in regional planning. For example, a number of regions are interested in expanding forest areas or safeguarding forest resources from outside disturbance (fires, illegal sheep farming, etc.) whereas others pay more attention to the economic role of forestry.

Table 2 – Main actions in favour of forestry pursuant to Regulation (EC) 1698/2005 and that regions can implement in RDP

	Measure	Code
Art. 21	Vocational training and information actions, including diffusion of scientific knowledge and innovative practices for persons engaged the agricultural, food and forestry sectors;	(111)
Art. 24	Use of advisory services by farmers and forest holders	(114)
Art. 25	Setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, as well as forestry	(115)

	advisory services	
Art. 26	Modernisation of agricultural holdings	(121)
Art. 27	Improving the economic value of forests	(122)
Art. 28	Adding value to agricultural and forestry products	(123)
Art. 29	Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and food sector	(124)
Art. 30	Improving and developing infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry	(125)
Art. 43	Afforestation of agricultural land	(221)
Art. 44	First establishment of agroforestry systems on agricultural land	(222)
Art. 45	Afforestation of non-agricultural land	(223)
Art. 46	Natura 2000 payments	(224)
Art. 47	Forest-environment payments	(225)
Art. 48	Restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions	(226)
Art. 49	Support for non-productive investments	(227)
Art. 53	Diversification into non-agricultural activities	(311)
Art. 54	Support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises	(312)
Art. 55	Encouragement of tourism activities	(313)
Art. 57	Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage	(323)
Art. 58	A training and information measure for economic actors operating in the fields covered by Axis 3	(331)
Art. 59	A skill-acquisition and animation measure	(332)

Source: MIPAAF Forestry Framework Programme

Public spending for forestry measures amounts to 1.861 million Euros, which is 11.2% of public spending for RDPs. If we add forestry-related actions included in “mixed” measures, overall funding for this area amounts to around 16.661 million Euros, which is 14.3% of overall public spending for RDPs.

Axis 2, in other words improving the environment and the countryside, is the heart of all planning for sustainable development of agricultural and forest lands and involves most of the financial resources for RDPs. Afforestation and reforestation activities for Axis 2, include conserving biodiversity and protecting forest systems with a high natural value, safeguarding surface and underground water resources and encouraging maintenance of agricultural activities in areas with handicaps.

The main actions concerning forests indicated by Regions for Axis 2 regard ex-novo creation of small grasslands/pastures to ensure biodiversity, restoration of more mature and natural woods, management of forest heritage to restore natural cenosi and improved specific and structural diversification; returning wood ecosystems to more natural conditions to make them more resistant and resilient to phenomena such as fires and invasion by parasites and alloctonous species; diversification of wood structure/composition, eradicating alloctonous species, re-naturalizing wooded areas mainly created for the purposes of anti-erosion; involving farmers and forest holders in monitoring Natura 2000 site biodiversity; improving management of the sites identified by regions to gather propagation material.

Non-productive investments may, for example, be used to fund actions on the water network to restore habitats or to purchase mobile enclosures to manage pasture grounds. Investments used to minimize

conflict between agricultural activities and wild fauna may also be required (for example, purchasing sheepdogs to protect herds of sheep, protecting bee hives from intrusion by wild animals, etc.).

The Framework Programme for Forestry (PQSF) was approved by the State and Region Conference at the end of 2008, which was drawn up according to Law 296 dated 27 December 2006 and in compliance with institutional competences to fulfil Community (more specifically, it is based on SCI standards for sustainable forest management deriving from Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe) and international obligations and offers support to individual regions in planning and establishing laws on safeguarding, conserving, valorising and developing forests.

The PQSF identifies four priority objectives to reach over a 10-year period (beginning from 1st January 2009), including territory and environment protection: maintaining and improving protection for forestry formations and defending these from natural and man-made adversities; maximizing the fixative ability of carbon; conserving the integrity and health of forest ecosystems; safeguarding biodiversity and landscape diversity.

The last of the above aspects receives substantial attention in the PQSF. The concrete actions contained therein include maintaining woods in the best possible condition in terms of both structure (encouraging floral diversification and increasing biomass) and functions (maintaining and/or restoring their status of conservation and ability for renewal and controlling the conditions in woods).

Specific reference is made to the need to conserve areas for typical indigenous bee populations or those from neighbouring areas and the Italian bee (Apis mellifera ligustica Spinola), both in order to conserve forest biotypes in honey production and for the fundamental pollination processes for woods and meadows.

Italy's participation in the European EUFORGEN programme according to Resolution S2 of the First MCPFE Conference in Strasbourg (1990) concerning conservation of forest genetic resources in Europe should be highlighted. This programme involves the need to adopt national strategies to conserve forest seeds.

Various regions have implemented Leg. Decree 386 dated 10 November 2003, "Implementation of Directive 1999/105/EC concerning the sale of forest materials deriving from multiplication", which adopted Community Directive 105/99 requesting Member States to identify the areas in which propagation material can be gathered for forestry purposes. This Directive requires full application by many other Italian regions.

4. Fishing

Amendments to Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) implemented through Reg. (EC) 2371 concerning conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources within CFP focuses on exploiting live aquatic resources under sustainable conditions from both economic and environmental-social viewpoints.

For this purpose, the Community take a careful approach by adopting measures aimed at protecting and conserving live aquatic resources, guaranteeing sustainable exploitation and reducing impact from fishing on marine ecosystems. The objective is to progressively manage fishing while safeguarding ecosystems.

A new funding tool – European Fisheries Fund (EFF) focuses on sustainable use of fish resources through tools such as biological rest, using selective systems and reducing fishing efforts. The main changes in the EFF include a long-term approach establishing objectives to achieve and/or maintain fish stocks, a new policy for reducing fleets, standardizing systems of control and further involving those involved in the Common Policy.

Five of the seven macro-objectives in the EFF listed in Article 4 of Reg. (EC) 1198/06 mention or focus on conserving fish biodiversity and relative habitats:

a) supporting common fisheries policy to ensure exploitation of live aquatic resources and supporting aquaculture for the purposes of sustainability from economic, environmental and social viewpoints;

b) encouraging sustainable balance between resources and the fishing capacity of the Community fishing fleet;

c) encouraging sustainable development of fishing in internal waters;

d) […]

e) reinforcing environmental and natural resource conservation and improvement when connected to fishing;

f) encouraging sustainable development and improvement of the quality of life in fishing areas;

g) [...]

The CFP also involves measures to develop aquaculture while conserving resources through structural and infrastructural actions involving partnership between State, Region, operators and producers.

The Ministry for Agricultural and Forestry Policies (MIPAAF) drew up an Operational Fisheries Programme 2007/2013 for Italy in line with EFF macro-objectives, which was approved by the EU Commission on 19 December 2007 together with Strategic Environmental Assessment (VAS) of the PO.

Both the PO and the VAS were drawn up involving all economic, social and environmental partners.

In addition to integrating VAS programming documents, the Environmental Report and Summary Declaration, the European Union CFP includes among its priorities the essential conservation of fish stocks and their natural habitat, whether this be marine or inland water.

The measures jointly funded by the European Fisheries Fund are divided into 5 priority Axes covering 5 “topic areas” of action. A rapid excursus among the Axes and EFF measures illustrates how environmental protection and fish biodiversity are primary and of absolute importance:

Axes I : Adapting Community Fleet

This comprises several measures to conserve fishery stocks by reinstating, managing and disarming, providing aid to temporarily halt fishing activities and replacing equipment with other more selective equipment with less impact.

Axis II : Aquaculture, fishing in territorial waters, transformation and marketing

This Axis also includes measures that directly or indirectly conserve the quality of the environment and aquatic stock: investments in aquaculture, hydro-environmental measures, veterinary measures, fishing in internal waters and measures for transforming and marketing fishing and aquaculture products.

More specifically, the most sensitive objectives in the aquaculture measure concern applying techniques that reduce impact or increase the positive effects on the environment, forms of aquaculture that allow conservation and improvement of the environment and natural resource and genetic diversity.

Axis III : Measures of Common Interest

The third Axis includes measures of environmental and fauna-related interest, such as: protecting and developing aquatic flora and fauna, collective actions, measures for fishing ports, landings and shelters, pilot projects.

Axis IV : Sustainable Development of Fishing Zones

The fourth Axis totally concentrates on the social, economic and environmental sustainability of development in fishing zones. A bottom-up approach is adopted, in other words the subjects proposing and implementing measures (borrowed from other Axes) in a geographic context that can be localized belong to the local private and public sector and form “Groups” with sufficient administrative capacities to carry out sustainable development in that specific area. Conserving the environment and aquatic stocks is one of the primary objectives in sustainable development strategy.

Axis V : Technical Assistance

Contributions for technical assistance may be provided to fund preparation, implementation, supervision and control over EFF measures. This may also include studies, inspections, gathering statistics, divulging information and establishing national and transnational networks among those engaged in sustainable development of fishing zones.

Two new Community regulations – to which Italy is required to adapt - became effective in 2008 in order to regulate two important problems and thereby ensure and extend the objective of sustainable fishing

activities outside Community waters and however to non-EU fishing vessels operating in Community waters:

- Preventing and discouraging illegal, undeclared and unregulated fishing activities (INN) (Reg. 1005/2008 EC), and

- Regulating fishing by Community fishing vessels outside Community waters and access for the ships of other countries to Community waters (Reg. 1006/2008 EC).

With regard to aquaculture, the MiPAAF prepared indications for implementing Community Regulation 708/2007 concerning the introduction of alien species for aquaculture and established a national register of alien species.

Aquaculture for conservation purposes

Reproducing and breeding aquatic organisms for the purposes of repopulation are an important tool for conserving aquatic species (FAO, 1997), especially threatened species and populations or those under extinction. Various projects for recovering fauna to thereby conserve the Adriatic sturgeon (Acipenser naccarii), an indigenous species of sturgeon classified as "vulnerable A1ac" (IUCN 2008), have been carried out in internal Italian waters over the last five years (Arlati, 2006; Arlati et al., 2007). Regarding the marine environment, the Dusky Grouper (Epinephelus marginatus), classified as "threatened A2d" (IUCN 2008) recently benefited from two repopulation programmes for the purposes of conservation (G. Marino, 2006; G. Marino, 2008). The "responsible repopulation" approach was adopted, thereby complying with practical and theoretical principles aimed at ensuring the best possible overall benefits while avoiding impact on the environment and biodiversity.

5. Quarries and mines

Hypogeum sites such as quarries and mines that are habitats for the species protected by the Habitat Directive, including Bats, are protected according to aforementioned Directive by D.P.C.M. 357/97 and subsequent amendments. These habitats are also safeguarded by European Agreement EUROBAT defined as part of the CMS (Convention to Conserve Migratory Species, Bonn, 1979 – implemented through Law 42 dated 25/1/1983), which was implemented in Italy through a Law published in Official Journal 138 dated 16-6-2005 - S.O. no. 109, safeguarding bat species reported in Italy and their habitats (32 species of Bats in eleven genres and four families, to which two species whose presence has not been confirmed recently (Rhinolophus blasii e Myotis dasycneme) and one species - Steppe Whiskered Bat (Myotis aurascens) - solely identified on a morphological basis and whose validity has not yet been confirmed through molecular analysis, should be added.)

In view of the importance – also with respect to for conserving the biodiversity therein -, mine sites were involved in a project in which they were inventoried. A census of Italian mine sites (from 1870 to 2006) illustrated the presence of 2,990 sites (300 of which are still operating). "Guidelines for conserving, managing and valorising sites and Geomining parks for the purposes of culture, teaching and tourism" propose the standards and methods to adopt to conserve mining sites, highlighting the main technical

and regulation-related problems and describing the main initiatives involving valorisation of Geomining Sites and Parks.

In order to fulfil the aforementioned objectives, especially identification and solution for existing technical and regulation-related problems, a precise definition of the juridical nature of existing geomining parks or those under establishment should be made in the near future.

For this purpose, the terms for possible coexistence between geomining park and mining activities should be defined in order to avoid any inappropriate interference between these two realities.

Existing Italian mine sites and possible lines of future development in mining activities – both on land and at sea - should therefore be constantly updated and the regulation gap in State legislation should be filled, above all in relation to the latter activities.

Another problems to face concerns appropriate safety regulations for persons and environmental protection, as existing mining safety regulations can obviously not be applied in the event of activities other than mining.

Another aspect to mention concerns exploring for oil, especially in the Adriatic Sea, and relative installation of drilling platforms (there are currently 101 platforms whose location and characteristics are well known), around which a no-fishing zone has been created, thereby favouring a habitat for numerous aquatic species finding shelter there. As most reserves have almost terminated, removing the relative platforms on completion of activities shall have potentially negative repercussions on aquatic fauna.

6. Tourism

Biodiversity conservation is the core of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECST). The ECST is a voluntary tool specially addressed to link the biodiversity/environmental conservation with sustainable human activities, with special reference to tourism. The main objective of ECST is to change the approach to conservation of local stakeholders making them aware of the importance of nature conservation as reason for their economic development.

The ECST asks protected areas managers to create a network with local tourism businesses in order to share strategies and plan actions to combine conservation and development. The relative methodology is provided by Europarc Federation (www.europarc.org) and at now roughly 60 parks around Europe have been awarded the Charter. Currently only 3 parks in Italy have joined ECST, but many others are working on it, including parks in Southern Italy (http://infosig3.frascati.enea.it/archicharter). Future improvements shall include the best indicators for monitoring the trend in relationships between biodiversity and pressure from tourism.

The “Second International Conference on Sustainable Tourism” promoted by Rimini Provincial Council with cooperation from the World Tourism Organization – UNWTO, the European Commission, the Italian House of Commons Authority – Department of Tourism, the Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea

and ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability was held in Rimini in November 2008. Various sustainable initiatives for competitive tourism were presented at the Conference, thereby determining stipulation of the "Second Charter for sustainable tourism", the so-called "Rimini Charter" ratifying the Aalborg Commitments of 2004 concerning Sustainable Tourism and implementing the guidelines from the World Tourism Organization for affirming sustainable tourism. More specifically, the need to ensure the best possible use of environmental resources, which are a key element to developing tourism, which maintaining essential ecological processes and contributing towards conservation of natural heritage and biodiversity is also highlighted.

Furthermore, many local Italian Administrations (including Chioggia town council, Giovo mountain community, Rimini provincial council, S. Benedetto del Tronto town council, Venice) have become members of the International Network of cities for sustainable tourism, which was created during the International Conference for Sustainable Tourism held in Rimini in 2001 and under the aegis of the ICLEI.

Italy participated in Project EDEN - European Destinations of Excellence, which was dedicated to "Tourism and Protected Areas" for 2008-2009. The purpose of this was to promote the tourist destinations in which economic growth objectives are in harmony with social, cultural and environmental sustainability.

The National Assessment Committee selects the winning destinations among those participating in competition according to the following standards:

a) Valorisation of the protected are for tourism purposes

b) Communication and new forms of tourisms to promote protected areas

c) Social responsibility in businesses operating in the area

d) Involvement from local communities

e) Accessibility and quality of offer

7. Human health policies related to biodiversity

Health policies related to biodiversity include regulation on genetically modified organisms and the prevention of vector born diseases (According to Directive 2001/18/EC of the European Parliament on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms, a genetically modified organism (GMO) means "an organism, with the exception of mankind, in which the genetic material has been altered in a way that does not occur naturally by mating and/or natural recombination").

The recently adopted EU legislation on GMOs (Regulation EC 1829/2003 and 1830/2003) introduced more rigorous procedures for the authorisation, labelling and analytical control of food and feed consisting, containing or derived from GMOs.

In the framework of food quality assurance, as required from EU and national regulations, a 2006-2008 National Plan was adopted by the Ministry of Health, regarding the implementation of a control network to detect genetically modified organism in food to harmonize inspection and foodcontrol programme done by local public health authorities and ensure centralised information flow.

The Ministry of Labour, Health and Welfare controls and coordinates the administrative and technical-scientific activities related to National and European regulations concerning the use of genetically modified micro-organisms in confined areas (GMMO) (Leg. Decree 206 dated 12 April 2001 – Implementing Council Directive 98/81/EC amending Directive 90/219/CEE concerning use of genetically modified micro-organisms in confined areas).

Applications using GMMOs above all involve research for new "biotechnological" medicines and new therapy for patients using "gene therapy".

More specifically, the Ministry of Health has established an Interministerial Assessment Commission comprising representatives and experts from all the institutions engaged in this area, whose job is to assess and express an opinion on applications for authorization for systems and confined use of GMMOs in risk categories I to IV, which is the classification used in Europe.

The main objective in assessing confinement measures is to protect human health and the environment from risk of contamination that using GMMO may present and, therefore, to constantly contribute towards conserving biodiversity.

The health situation in Italian zootechny may be considered under control further to eradication and supervision plans implemented for a number of years, especially in relation to new "emerging" illnesses linked to climate change and the effects of globalization, although there are some critical situations in some parts of the territory relating to combating and eradicating certain zoonotic diseases.

All actions and activities implemented comply with the new European Union strategy for animals' health 2007-2013): "Prevention is better than cure". Ensuring a high level in public and food health by reducing the rate of biological and chemical risks to mankind and promoting animals' health by preventing/reducing the rate of sickness are among the pillars of this policy.

In addition to ordinary activities, this area involves research projects including one entitled "Vectors of innovative expression for the Blue tongue virus" for which the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale of the Abruzzo and Molise Regions is responsible. Other projects concerning the relationship between vectors/zoonotics are under definition.

The Ministry of Labour, Health and Welfare Health Department is responsible for issuing regulations concerning the prevention and control of zoonosis caused by Culicid (mosquitoes) through the Directorate general of Animal Health and Veterinary Drugs and carrying out laboratory surveys on vectors for the purposes of veterinary health together with the National Experimental Zoo-prophylactic Institutes located throughout the country.

8. Food security

Biodiversity is a key factor in food security. In Italy, the implementation of specific measures for biodiversity protection related to food is left under the responsibility of individual bodies (municipalities, provinces, regions, ...) but is not managed at the national level through a specific regulation. The main strategies implemented so far to raise awareness on the need of biodiversity protection are:

• several researches and awareness campaigns implemented, including the Ethnic foods study;

• various projects for nutritional education in schools, including school gardens, the ethnic menus in public schools or the new project "Intergustando". The aim of those projects is to develop children knowledge on food variety and to raise awareness of the importance of complementarity in nutrition;

• promotion of traditional farming under the protection of Slowfood13 for biodiversity protection and traditional processing conservation to preserve small local producers and to carve-out a role in the market for traditional farming;

• initiatives to promote fair trade in some municipalities.

International Biodiversity Agreements at the global, regional and European level

9. Global biodiversity tools

In addition to CBD, other International Conventions (CITES, Convention on Migratory Species, Ramsar and the World Heritage Convention) are directly involved in conserving biodiversity.

CITES –Washington Convention	The Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) aims to control international trade of wild animal and plant species threatened with extinction and is currently the most important existing treaty concerning the conservation of wild species threatened with extinction from international trade. The main tool available for implementing CITES is Decree 176 dated 8 July 2005: the Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea – Nature Protection Directorate, the State Forestry Department, the Ministry of Productive Activities and the Customs and Excise Agency have implemented regulations concerning controls on international trade of wild animal and plant species threatened with extinction (CITES) establishing the procedures for customs checks and an Operational Manual with all the procedures to implement in customs areas is also adopted.
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands	The RAMSAR Convention aims to conserve what are called "humid" areas by identifying them and setting their confines, studying their characteristic aspects – especially avifauna – and implementing programmes to ensure their conservation and valorisation. The Ramsar Convention was one of the first inter-governmental treaties to deal with conserving biodiversity and the only to focus on one habitat – wetlands. This Convention was ratified and brought into effect by Italy through DPR 448 dated 13 March 1976 and subsequent DPR 184 dated 11 February 1987. Italy is currently a Member of the MEDWET Committee.
Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) (Bonn Convention)	The Convention on Conserving Migratory wild fauna Species approved by the European Community Council through Decision 82/461/CEE dated 24/6/1892 and implemented in Italy through Law 42 dated 25/1/1983 aims to encourage Parties to sign agreements to ensure that migratory species are protected throughout their area of distribution, especially those listed in Annex I (threatened migratory species). Appendix II lists the migratory species in a bad state of conservation and that require international agreements for their conservation and management. Italy has signed the following international agreements concerning the CMS: • ACCOBAMS for conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and the neighbouring Atlantic Area • EUROBAT European agreement on conservation of bats and their habitats

	• AEWA for conserving migratory aquatic avifauna.
World Heritage Convention (UNESCO)	Further to the Convention on Conserving Global Heritage – cultural and natural –adopted in 1972, UNESCO has recognized 878 sites until now (679 fine arts, 174 natural and 25 mixed) in 145 countries worldwide. Italy is currently the country with the highest number of sites included in the list of World Heritage Sites. The Convention indicates physical, biological and geological features and the habitat of endangered animal and plant species and areas of particular scientific and aesthetic value as "Natural heritage". There are currently 44 UNESCO sites in Italy (44 of which entirely within national boundaries and two of which also in the Holy See and Switzerland respectively).

10. Regional transnational biodiversity tools

Convention on the Alps	The Italian Republic acknowledged, through the protocol of implementation of 1991, preparation of landscape programmes and/or plans, preventing and rebalancing compromises in nature and the landscape, functional effectiveness of ecosystems, systematic observation of nature and the landscape, scientific research, any other measure to conserve wild animal and plant species, their diversity and habitats and definition of the relative comparable standards as fundamental commitments due to their essential and functional nature.
Barcelona Convention	The Barcelona Convention is the juridical and operational tool for the UN Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP). This Convention was signed in 1976 and became effective in 1978. Italy ratified it in 1979 through Law 30/1979. It was amended in 1995, also in order to implement indications from in Agenda 21 produced in Rio in 1992. All countries overlooking the Mediterranean currently adhere to this Convention, of which the European Union has also become a Member. This Convention is currently implemented through a number of technical Protocols **PELAGOS Agreement** France, Italy and Monaco have signed an Agreement for the Pelagos Sanctuary (ASPIM area for the Barcelona Convention) to create a Sanctuary for Marine Mammals in the Mediterranean to conserve a pelagica area (Mar Ligure and north Tyrrhenian Sea) comprising numerous species of cetaceans, especially the common fin whale and sperm whale.

11. European and pan-European tools

As Member State of the European Union, Italy is obliged to comply with and implement Directives and all relative relevant regulation and juridical tools.

Birds Directive	The objective of Directive 79/409/CEE is to conserve all wild species of birds. More specifically, it involves specific conservation measures for certain species and their habitats; various management measures are also included, including exploitation of species that can be hunted. It involves special protection measures for the habitats of species listed in Annex I, for which Special Protection Zones are established (ZPS).
Directive 92/43/CEE on "Habitats"	The purpose of this Directive is to "contribute towards safeguarding biodiversity by conserving natural habitats, as well as wild flora and fauna (…)" (art. 2). In addition to rigorous protection of certain flora and fauna species, it introduced the concept of protecting natural habitats as an essential means of maintaining or restoring a satisfactory status of conservation in the fauna and flora species of Community interest.
WFD-Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC	The Water Framework Directive (WFD), implemented through Leg. Decree 152/2006 states establishment of a framework of actions to safeguard waters (inland surface, transition, coastal and underground) in order to protect and improve the status of aquatic, terrestrial and marine-coastal ecosystems, as well as the wetlands directly dependent on aquatic environment as some of its main objectives. The main special feature of the WFD is that it proposes an ecosystem overview of water bodies, defining actions to implement to ensure sustainable management of waters at the hydrographical district level. The ultimate objective of this Directive is to achieve a "good" ecological status for waters by 2015. The WFD also involves establishment of one or more protected area registers for each hydrographical district and achieving a "satisfactory" state of conservation for the species and habitats that depend on the aquatic environment, are protected by the Habitat and Birds Directive (see Habitat Directive art. 1 lett. e, i) and are included in the aforementioned register of protected areas by 2015. The WFD involves inclusion of Natura 2000 sites and Ramsar Zones in the register of protected areas, for which the best possible integration among the three Directives exists. In order to achieve environmental objectives, the River Basin Management Plans (RBDP) must involve characterization of the river district and protection measures, as

	well as economic analysis of water use (integrated with those established in the Birds and Habitat Directive). Application of the WFD regards marine-coastal waters with respect to the marine environment.
Marine Framework Directive 2008/56/EC	The recent framework Directive on European Marine Strategy (MSD) (Dir 2008/56) further incorporated and developed the subject of sustainable development by promoting an ecosystem approach and proposing actions to take on a regional or sub-regional marine scale. The European Union is also committed to developing a Maritime Policy, for which the Commission has currently adopted a Green Book (COM(2006)275). The MSD is the "environmental pillar" of this Maritime Policy and is particularly important for protecting the marine environment. It aims to contribute towards making the various environmental problems in various policies, agreements and legislative measures that affect the marine environment coherent and integrate these. It will be possible to ensure more systematic and comprehensive knowledge of the state of European marine waters to thereby improve and make more effective the actions assumed through Regional Marine Conventions and existing European policies in the area, such as the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) through its application. Italy is required to implement the contents of this Directive in its own legislation by 2010. Subsequently, following an initial assessment and monitoring, Member States shall be required to develop programmes containing measures to achieve or maintain a good environmental status for their marine waters for each marine region or sub-region involved by 2016. The ambitious objective of the MSD, in other words achieving a "good environmental status" for all European marine waters by 2020, involves an innovative and holistic approach that takes into account all those uses for the sea that are also the key elements required for an effective marine environment policy as part of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The MSD has commenced its process of implementation and, under some aspects, plays a determining role in integrating the commitments undertaken by Italy with CBD and for development of a National Biodiversity Strategy.
VIA, VAS - Environmental Assessment (SEA, EIA)	The Italian Legislative framework relating to Environmental Assessment (SEA, EIA) establishes general principles of an Environmental Assessment System that is developed along the entire decision-making process from strategic planning on the making project of works, contributing significantly to the choice of measures to be undertaken in compliance with the carrying capacity of ecosystems and resources and the preservation of biodiversity. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) (The SEA process, introduced in Europe through Directive 2001/42/EC, was implemented in Italy through Legislative Decree 152/06, as amended by Legislative Decree 4/08) concerns plans and programs which are likely to have significant impacts on the environment, including issues such as biodiversity, flora and fauna, in order to ensure sustainable development. This Assessment procedure is systematically carried out for plans and programs which have been determined to require an appropriate assessment procedure on Natura 2000 sites (art. 6 of 92/43/CEE Directive) according to Decree (DPR) 357/97. Biodiversity conservation is a key issue included in Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) as indicated by current Italian legislation (Environmental Impact Assessments were introduced in Europe through Directive 85/337/CEE and 97/11/EC and in Italy is actually restricted by Leg. Decree 152/06, as modified by Leg. Decree 4/08 and DPR dated 12 April 1996 regarding regional legislation). This procedure describes and assesses the possible effects of the proposed project on vegetation, flora, fauna and ecosystems, in the site and the surrounding area concerned. Art. 5 of DPR 357/97 (implementation of 92/43/CEE Directive) establishes that evaluation of the ecological elements in Natura 2000 Sites is an important requirement for land planning. The purpose of the assessment procedure established in art. 6 "Habitat Directive" is to identify and to assess potential impacts of plan or project on the sites concerned, with regard to their conservation objectives. In particular, the potential effects on species and habitats of community interest, especially priority ones, must be evaluated. In the context of the aforementioned assessment procedures, mitigation and compensation measures are included to reduce biodiversity loss.

As Member of the Council of Europe (CoE), Italy has signed the relative biodiversity Conventions.

Berne Convention	The Berne Convention on conserving wildlife and the natural environment in Europe adopted in Berne in 1979 was ratified by Italy through Law 503 dated 5 August 1981. This is a framework convention originating both the main Community tools for conserving protected species and their habitats and the vast and articulated Convention on Conserving Biological Diversity.
European Landscape Convention	This Convention was signed by Italy and another 26 Member States in Florence on 20 October 2000 and applies to the entire territory of the signing States, with the objective of encouraging public authorities to adopt policies to conserve, manage and plan landscapes and to organize European cooperation in relative policies. The European Landscape Convention was ratified and implemented in Italy through Law 14 dated 9 January 2006. This Law implicitly refers to conserving and safeguarding biodiversity at the landscape level, which leads to creation of local cultures and represents a fundamental component of European cultural and

	natural heritage, thereby contributing towards the wellbeing and satisfaction of human beings and consolidation of the European identity. The first effect of this Convention in Italy was stipulation of an agreement between the Ministry of Fine Arts and Cultural Activities, Regions and Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano in 2001 to review landscape plans according to the standards established in the Convention.

Other conventions affecting biodiversity

12. The other Rio conventions

Conserving biodiversity is explicitly or implicitly covered in United Nations Conventions created as principal mechanisms also with juridical effect through the Rio Summit in 1992 and subsequently implemented in Italy through specific legislative tools.

At the international level, these three Conventions have also created tools to ensure synergy, in other words to ensure implementation of integrated actions, as well as effectiveness of both different specific objectives and shared objectives, thereby maximizing relative results and integrating relative effects. More specifically, a Joint Liaison Group comprising three Executive Secretaries and other high officers from the subsidiary bodies of the three Rio Conventions that was established and meets periodically to report decisions made to the executive bodies of the Conventions, in other words the COPs.

Integration at the level of concrete local or national actions proved more difficult, although some positive elements are contained in national implementation strategies. More specifically, actions to conserve forest, agricultural and land water resource ecosystems explicitly or implicitly have obvious connections to conserving biodiversity.

UNFCCC	The National Strategy to Implement the Kyoto Protocol established in Decision ICEP 123/2002, when mentioning afforestation or reforestation, forest management and agricultural land management and re-vegetation clearly define objectives not only in terms of fixing atmospheric carbon for the purposes of mitigating emissions and their storage, but also for the purposes of combating drought and desertification and conserving biodiversity.
UNCCD	By way of implementing the UNCCD Convention, the Italian Government issued the National Action Plan through Decision ICEP 299/1999 to combat drought and desertification. Development of research programmes for this purpose is supported as a primary tool (art. 3, paragraph b). Protecting land and sustainable management of water resources are also indicated as part of the four priority topics, thereby contributing towards indicating the need to safeguard all biotic components in ecosystems, all be it implicitly.

13. Other global and regional transnational tools that affect biodiversity

Global Ballast Water Convention (IMO-GW)	Ballast water on board ships contains a large number of living organisms, including fungi, bacteria, larvae and adult specimens of numerous marine species (plants and animals). Most of these organisms cannot survive in the place that ballast water is discharged, whereas others actually manage to proliferate, multiplying excessively in their new habitat up to the point of threatening its integrity. The introduction of non-indigenous species is one of the main threats to biological diversity. In order to reduce the danger from introduction of non-indigenous and potentially dangers species in different marine habitats, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has developed an ad hoc legislative tool: the International Convention for Controlling and Managing Ballast Water and Sediments (BW Convention). This BW Convention was adopted in February 2004 and is expected to come into force twelve months after the date on which the 30 States representing at least 35% of global tonnage have ratified it. Only fourteen of the Member States representing 3.55% of the global tonnage ratified this Convention by 31 August 2008. Italy has still not ratified this Convention; the only EU Member States to ratify the Convention are Spain and Norway. With specific regard to the Mediterranean area,

	developing a strategy to deal with transferring alien species via ballast water was discussed by an assembly comprising eighteen riverine Mediterranean States and the European Commission during a meeting held in Dubrovnik in Croatia on 11-12 September 2008. This Assembly decided to establish a regional task force to develop such strategy and encourage implementation of the 2004 international convention. The Assembly unanimously agreed that Croatia should lead the task force for its first mandate, in other words until the second meeting of the Task Force to be held in 2010. It was also decided that an action plan comprising operational procedures should be developed as part of the strategy. In order to ensure the success of the process, four groups – each led by a Mediterranean coastline country – will be established to work on specific topics such as: risk assessment (Turkey), juridical aspects (Croatia), reinforcing capacities (Cyprus) and control policies (Italy).
Aarhus Convention	Italy implemented Directive 2003/4/EC on regulating access to environmental information in compliance with indications from the Aarhus Convention through Leg. Decree 195/2005.
Cotonou Agreement, EC-DG Development	The Cotonou Agreement mainly aims to reduce and, in the long-term, eliminate poverty and progressively integrate countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) into the global economy, in compliance with objectives for sustainable development. The Cotonou Agreement inaugurates a new approach to cooperation following the limited success of the main procedure for managing non-reciprocal trade preferences in previous conventions and the need to adapt to international developments, such as globalization and technological evolution, as well as profound social changes in ACP countries. This new approach aims to reinforce the political dimension to guarantee new flexibility and provide more responsibilities to ACP States. The new partnership is based on five inter-dependent pillars: • Reinforcing the political dimension of relations between ACP States and the EU; • Encouraging participation-based approaches, opening up to the civil society, the private sector and other non-governmental organisms; • Development strategies and focussing on reducing poverty; • Introducing a new framework for economic and trade cooperation; • Reforming financial cooperation.
Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UNECE)	The Helsinki Convention (UN ECE) of 17 March 1992 on protecting and using transboundary watercourses and international lakes became effective on 6 October 1996 and was ratified by Italy through Law 171 dated 12/03/1996. The objectives linked to conserving biodiversity include: Achieving levels of quality in underground and surface waters without effects or significant risks to human health and the environment, guaranteeing that the rate of extraction of water resources is sustainable in the long-term Guaranteeing a high level of all surface and underground water bodies, preventing pollution and promoting sustainable use of water resources. Guaranteeing a high level of protection for bathing waters and revising the directive on bathing waters.
Espoo Convention (UNECE)	The 1991 ONU/CEE Convention on assessing the environmental impact in a transboundary context (Espoo Convention), taking advantage of current VIA legislation, established advisory procedures for Parties that may be subjected to transboundary environmental impact due to the projects proposed. The Espoo Convention became effective in 1997, the European Community signed it on 26 February 1991 and it was ratified in Italy through Law 640 dated 3 November 1994. The Espoo Convention (26-27 February 2001) decided to commence negotiations to prepare a juridically obliging tool in the form of a Convention Protocol regarding strategic environmental assessment, which establishes detailed requirements in order to assess and notify its environmental and health-related effects, which means any effect on the environment, especially on human health, flora, fauna, biodiversity, land, climate, air, water, landscape, natural sites, material goods, cultural heritage and interaction among these factors.

Biodiversity in other national and sub-national strategies and programmes

14. National sustainable development plans and activities

Italy does not have a National Sustainable Development Plan to embrace all the so-called “pillars” of sustainability, in other words environmental, economic and social sustainability, although there is a section in the ICEP at the institutional level called the “Sustainable Development” Commission whose

task is to make related provisions operational. Following the Johannesburg Summit in summer 2002, Italy approved an Environmental Action Strategy for Sustainable Development focussing on the definition of strategies and tools, including indicators, relating to environmental aspects. Conserving biodiversity is one of the primary components of the environmental "pillar" in sustainable development.

The Environmental Action Strategy for Sustainable Development.

Concern for biodiversity is integral to sustainable development not just because of the important intrinsic value of nature but also because it results in a decline in services, such as provision of food, re-cycling of nutrients, etc. which are provided by natural systems. The conservation of biodiversity is therefore one of the main objectives set out by the Italian "Environmental action strategy for sustainable development" (ICEP Deliberation No. 57/2002), which also defines specific targets, instruments and indicators aimed at achieving this general objective.

To monitor the Strategy, ten priority indicators were selected by the Strategy itself; ISPRA is charged with the yearly updating of the relevant data. This set of indicators does not include any indicator relevant to biodiversity. Moreover, all these indicators address the environmental dimension of sustainability, without including its economic, social and institutional dimensions.

A suitable revision of the Italian strategy, following the revised EU sustainable development strategy, would solve both these problems. In the reviewed list of sustainable development indicators (EUROSTAT, "Measuring progress towards a more sustainable Europe – 2007 Monitoring report of the EU sustainable development strategy", 2007), two out of 11 core indicators proposed are relevant to the key SDS challenge "Conservation and management of natural resources": "Common Bird Index" and "Fish catches taken from stock outside safe biological limits".

15. Local action for environmental sustainable development

Sustainability projects have been promoted at the local, regional, provincial, town council, mountain community, association, park, etc. level in compliance with Agenda 21 deriving from the Rio Summit and updated by an Implementation Plan approved ten years later, which gives local action a role of prime importance in achieving sustainable development.

These local projects have often derived from an integrated approach to sustainability, generally conjugated as environmental sustainability, therefore explicitly and implicitly taking into account biodiversity conservation, including together with other objectives.