



## Italy

The Italian Ministry of Environment and Territory is actively engaged in the field of education for environment and sustainable development, especially focusing on promoting public awareness. A **National System for Environmental Education, Information and Training (INFEA)** has been established in Italy to bring together the various actors involved in activities of environmental education. It is an innovative integrated system directly involving State and Regions in the programming and financing of initiatives. The system operates through a network of about 140 centres “**Environmental Education Centres**”, established by local institutions and managed in cooperation with various stakeholders, like environmental associations, private enterprises, universities. The centres, some of them located within protected natural areas, promote and support projects of environmental education for various categories of learners. Projects for children are carried out within or in cooperation with schools, on specific themes like water, waste, air pollution etc. The activities carried out are focused, *inter alia*, on the dissemination of information on the local and global state of the environment, on the ways to achieve sustainable development objectives, the changes required in individual and collective behaviours. They operate in a synergistic way with the concrete measures of environmental policy. The centres have also undertaken the role of facilitating dialogue between the civil society and local administrators within Local Agenda 21 processes.

### Projects/Initiatives

The **Heliantus Environment Education Project** is an initiative by the Ministry of the Public Education of Italy and Department of Development of Instruction. Currently in its third edition, the Heliantus Project is aimed to enhance young people’s knowledge and awareness about the environment and associated challenges. Its objective is to inform and educate students and teachers on some of today’s crucial environmental issues. The target-users are primary and secondary school students, who benefit from a series of age group-differentiated learning activities, consistent with each group’s cognitive and learning needs. The environmental issues examined in the Heliantus project include the impact of pervasive urbanization over artistic asset and cultural heritage; the increasing deterioration of coastal and pelagic waters brought about by careless exploitation; possible preservation interventions, preservation of biodiversity, sustainable nutrition. Part of the project’s line is aimed to maximize information acquisition on EU and national environmental legislation.

The **National Agency for the Protection of the Environment and for Technical Services (APAT)** is engaged in various initiatives of environmental education and professional training. It coordinates the network of Regional and Provincial Protection Agencies (ARPA/APPA), also in order to guarantee their participation in the Network INFEA. APAT is member of the ‘**Green Spider**’ Network of the European Commission, aimed at sharing experiences among EU Member States. It is currently in charge of the dissemination, through the network of regional and local agencies, of an interactive educational kit for children from three to seven years old, focused on water and air pollution, developed as part of an EU project (“Flepy”). The Ministry of Education has also promoted agreements with the National Organisation of Natural Science Teachers (<http://www.sigmt.it/anisn>), the Italian Geographic Society (<http://www.societageografica.it>), and the Council of Architects and Planners, aiming at developing interactive multimedia tools for training on sustainability aspects. Training material to be adopted in formal national training of school teachers is also being developed by a joint effort of these three associations. The Ministry of Environment is also a partner of MEDIES.

Among other initiatives promoted by Italian Ministry of Environment, is the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) project “**UMANA DIMORA**”, which aims to facilitate networking between environmental NGOs in South-Eastern Europe, including training activities.