Throughout 2002, the Istituto Superiore “Amerigo Vespucci” of Gallipoli (Lecce) organised three education courses aimed at developing business initiatives connected to the sea, its protection and its tourist potential.

The first course, “Strategies for the development of nautical tourism”, paid particular attention to practical training and, specifically, to learning how to manoeuvre both sail and motor yachts.

Obtaining a nautical licence and acquiring techniques for the practice of water sports are, in fact, the vital elements for a pleasure boat operator.

The second course, “Marine biology itineraries”, aimed at developing the correct attitude and behaviour towards the sea, both respect for it and protection of it.

The data collected from the observations and study of the marine ecosystem allowed the analysis of various organisms and the study of their behaviour and habitat.

Great relevance was given to the practical part of the course, particularly to the monitoring of sea water.

The third course, “Sea enterprise”, consisted of theoretical and practical lessons concerning the marine environment, diving techniques, first aid and business practices, with particular references to small firms.

The students contributed to mapping some underwater paths of special interest, to include sponges, gorgonias and “resident” fish.

The cost of each course, which involved 45 students from the Istituto and other Scuole Secondarie, was of about 22,000 Euros which was financed with resources from the National Operational Programme (NOP) “La scuola per lo sviluppo” (“School for development”).