

# 2BParks Environmental Clusters

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**The Environmental Clusters are an important activity of 2BParks, envisaging to group enterprises, socio-economic operators and public bodies which are committed to adopt sustainable business strategies, therefore contributing to the enhancement of the MED Protected Areas and to environmental protection and conservation at large.**

**This article discusses the concepts underlying the constitution of the 2BParks clusters, outlines the benefits resulting to the participant operators and summarises the criteria and rules for admission of operators.**

## What is a Sustainable Business?

The concept of “sustainable development” is widely accepted by the international community. It was described initially in the Brundtland Report, in 1987, as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

Although the general concept is easy to understand, it has been criticized for being difficult to apply for more practical purposes within different sectors.

In the scope of 2BParks, the practical objective related to the implementation of Environmental Clusters is reducing harm to local environments, reducing negative impacts on natural and cultural heritage and maximising social and economic benefits to local

communities, therefore contributing to overall sustainability.

For the purpose of clustering activities the following general criteria were adopted to define a sustainable business:

- Uses resources in a sustainable way (e.g. reducing consumption of water and energy, using renewable sources of energy);
- Minimises its negative impacts on the environment (e.g. minimising and recycling waste and waste waters);
- Supports local economies (e.g. providing employment opportunities and sourcing goods and services locally);
- Involves local communities, customers and public in general, creating environmental awareness.

## Which Benefits result from a Sustainable Business?

Adopting a sustainable business strategy will bring sound benefits and advantages to enterprises and other operators:

- **It contributes to effective cost reduction.** A good environmental performance results in effective cost reductions, providing higher efficiency of resource use and increased business feasibility.

- **It helps to differentiate from competitors.** Environmental and social issues are increasingly important to customer's decisions. To respond to these issues on the basis of a responsible approach will ensure differentiation from other competitors and will increase competitive capacity in the global market.
- **It helps to diversify and to improve products and services.** A sustainable strategy helps to gain in-sight into the business, providing the grounds to diversify and to improve quality of products and services, thus enabling companies to retain existing clients and reach new clients.
- **It provides a new angle for marketing and promotion.** Acting as a model of responsible and innovative business improves public visibility and overall perception of the company.
- **It creates dynamics for economic growth.** The effect of the above factors combined with the development of inter-relations with twining and complementary operators creates dynamics for economic growth in the Environmental Cluster, as a whole.

In short, **a sustainable strategy will enhance the business image, will save money and will contribute to increase business opportunities and revenues.**

## Which are the general criteria applicable to select Cluster Members?

The businesses and other private and public institutions participating in the 2BParks Clusters should adopt appropriate technologies and good practices to ensure an adequate environmental performance, notably for efficient resource use and minimisation of emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG), as well as minimisation of production and recycling of waste and waste waters, therefore contributing to reducing their environmental impacts, protecting biodiversity and tackling issues related to climate changes.



The form is titled "Declaration on Honour on Environmental and Social Policy" and is for "The Antonio Rossi". It states that the signatory is committed to protect, conserve and restore the natural environment for the benefit of present and future generations. The form includes a list of four commitments: 1. Comply with all applicable environmental laws and regulations, as well as regulations referring to economic and social obligations; 2. Manage our activities and services to operate more efficiently and profitably, using fewer resources and generating minimal greenhouse gases, waste and waste water; 3. Improve environmental performance and reduce environmental impact of our activities; 4. Create environmental awareness among our employees, customers, suppliers and the community at large. The form also states that this commitment has been communicated to all employees and shall be made available to customers, the public and other interested parties. At the bottom, there are fields for "Name", "Position", "Date", and "Signature".

*Declaration on Honour on Environmental and Social Policy for Cluster Members*

The operators should respect the European, national and regional legislation related to environment, along with the regulations referring to economic and social issues set out by local, regional and national authorities.

Customers (local residents and tourists) can make more sustainable choices if efforts are made to communicate clear information on environmental behaviour and environmental good practices adopted by the Cluster Members. In this respect, the label 2BParks should be associated to sustainability, through underlying data related to the environmental performance of the operators, whenever possible,

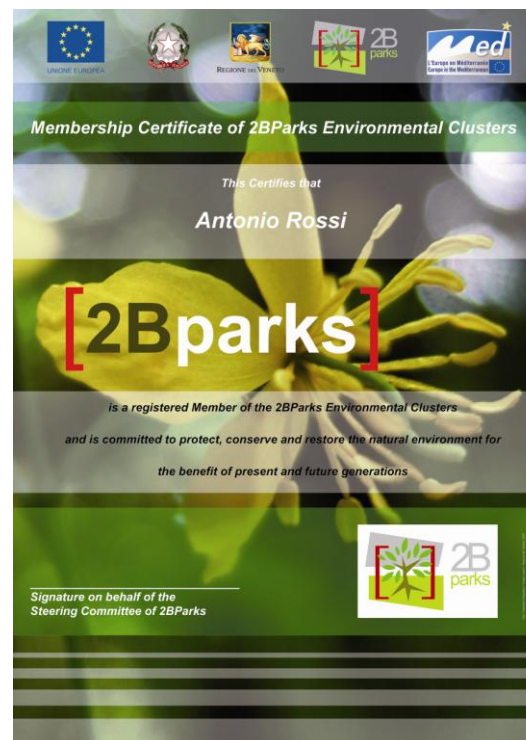
The Members of the Clusters are encouraged to participate actively in the initiatives and processes put in place or supported by the 2BParks partnership and to use the tools created by the project to promote the implementation of the Environmental Clusters, the Local Development Pilot Plans (LDPP) and the Local Tourism Sustainable Plans (LTSP).

A holistic approach is envisaged, based on collaborative work and sharing of information and experiences to integrate sustainability into management practices and to secure the active participation of Members in developing sustainable activities, to generate strong Environmental Clusters.

Although Cluster Members are not expected to compulsory adopt formal environmental management systems, they should however implement the following **core steps**:

- Provide information on their environmental performance, to qualify as Members;

- Sign an environmental business statement;
- Disseminate information on good environmental practices and results obtained, to customers, suppliers and public in general, to create environmental awareness.



*Membership Certificate of 2Bparks  
Environmental Cluster Members*

Grândola, Portugal, August, 2012