

**Tragedy of the Commons:** *see* **Commons**

### **Train–Sea–Coast (TSC) Programme**

The Train–Sea–Coast Programme is an inter-country cooperative training programme composed of training/educational centres in developing countries, countries in transition and developed countries (Vallejo, 2001). The main objective of TSC is to enhance national/regional capacity building through training on key trans-boundary topics/problems in the area of coastal and ocean matters (Reis and Bergesch, 2002). The TSC was established in 1993 (and became operational in 1995) by the **United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS)**.

The TSC Programme is composed of Course Development Units (CDUs) based at the national level that address training needs at the regional and/or local level. The courses can be adapted and shared, thus avoiding duplication and making the training effort more cost-effective and tailored to specific training needs at the local, national and regional level (Vallejo, 2001).

Examples of TSC projects include assisting developing countries in improving their capacity to manage municipal wastewater and to reduce the harmful discharge of untreated wastewater (de Ruyter van Steveninck and Schwartz, 2004), **integrated coastal zone management** in Brazil (Reis *et al.*, 2002) and management of **marine protected areas** (Train–Sea–Coast Programme, 2006). Some training courses were developed in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the **Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (UNEPGPA)**, the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization** Institute for Water Education (UNESCO-IHE) and the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** (Vallejo, 2001; Train–Sea–Coast Programme, 2006).

Funding is through the United Nations Development Programme's Global Environment Facility, with co-financing provided by UNDOALOS and in-country institutions hosting the TSC CDUs. The TSC is managed by the

TSC/Central Support Unit hosted by UNDOALOS in New York.

### **Related internet source**

Train–Sea–Coast Programme: [http://www.un.org/Depts/los/tsc\\_new/TSCindex.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/tsc_new/TSCindex.htm)

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### **Travel Agent**

A travel agent works at the interface between the tourist and the travel and **tourism** operator, such as package tour operators, car rental companies, hotels, travel insurance etc. Travel agencies act as the retailer in the tourism distribution chain, marketing services to customers on behalf of wholesalers and other tourism suppliers (Cliff and Ryan, 2002). Examples of major travel agencies include Thomas Cook, Thomson Holidays (now a subsidiary of TUI), American Express and Carlson Wagonlit. Associations such as the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) and the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) were established in order to act as advocates on behalf of member travel agents, the travel industry and the travelling public.

Traditionally, agencies were paid by the **tour operator**, in the form of a commission. For many decades it was common in the travel industry to calculate commission as a percentage based on turnover. It was customary, in years past, for tour operators to pay travel agencies approximately 10% for selling products/services to the end customer on their behalf. Today, however, more and more tour operators are cutting the commission altogether, forcing travel agencies to find alternative methods of earning to compensate for their services.

Since the end of the 1990s, two trends have emerged regarding the way business is conducted between travel agent and tour operator. First, the rate of commission is reduced to a very minimal percentage or, in many cases, even to zero commission, which forces the travel agent to require a payment directly from the customer. Therefore, the travel agency role has been transformed from a mediator into an autonomous dealer. Second, the percentage commission is replaced by an independent, fixed turnover sum per booking, for example a 'handling fee' or 'flat rate'.

Although today there are few travel agencies specializing exclusively in marine