

Call for Applications (Call ID: 57/2024)
Posts of Full-time Research Support Officer (PhD Student)

MEDiverSEAty – “In quest of the human dimensions of MEDiterranean Marine Biodiversity”
Funded by HORIZON-TMA-MSCA-DN

Islands and Small States Institute

1. Applications are invited for two full-time Research Support Officers (RSOs) to work as an Early-Stage Researcher (PhD candidate) on the grant “In quest of the human dimensions of MEDiterranean Marine Biodiversity” (MEDiverSEAty). This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon Europe programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No **101119700**. For further information on the Marie Curie schemes and eligibility please visit http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/actions/research-networks_en. Further information on the MEDiverSEAty project is available at <http://mediverseaty.eu>.
2. Applicants must be in possession of Master’s degree or equivalent in an area of study related to the proposed area of research and ideally in one of the following areas: island and small states studies, economics, geography, political science, sociology, anthropology, marine biology, and any other area deemed appropriate by the selection board. Applicants are required to be in possession of appropriate qualifications to demonstrate excellent skills in English, and excellent scientific writing skills.
3. Applicants must comply with the following Marie Curie Grant rules.

H2020 MSCA Mobility Rule: Candidates must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the host organisation for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the recruitment date. Compulsory national service, short stays such as holidays, and time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention will not be taken into account.

H2020 MSCA ESR eligibility criteria: Candidates must be, at the date of recruitment by the host organisation, in the first four years (full-time equivalent research experience) of their research careers and have not been awarded a doctoral degree. Full-Time Equivalent Research Experience is measured from the date when the researcher obtained the degree entitling him/her to embark on a doctorate (either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which the researcher is recruited, even if a doctorate was never started or envisaged).

4. Throughout the programme the appointed candidates will be hosted by the Islands and Small States Institute at the University of Malta. The selected candidate might opt to be seconded to one of the research locations agreed by the MEDiverSEAty project consortium, for which length of stay and location shall be agreed and endorsed by the supervisory team of the Early-Stage Researchers (PhD candidate). The candidates will also be expected to attend a number of multidisciplinary research-related scientific courses as well as summer schools, winter schools and skills workshops. These will be organised by the MEDiverSEAty project partners.
5. The successful candidates will be expected to work forty hours per week for a definite period of three years. The post carries an initial salary of €31,200 (pro-rata) for the Year 2024. The candidates are also eligible for mobility allowance of €600 per month and, where applicable at the time of application, a family allowance of €660 per month.
 - **The mobility allowance** covers the costs related to the mobility of recruited researchers, such as travel and accommodation. This allowance covers only personal costs incurred by researchers (as opposed to costs linked to professional activities which are covered under the contribution for research, training and networking).
 - **The family allowance** aims to compensate additional costs due to family obligations.
6. The candidates must work exclusively for the project during the employment contract. The candidates must fulfil the conditions to be admitted in the PhD programme indicated in the Job Vacancy.
7. Candidates should submit the following to <https://www.um.edu.mt/hrmd/workatum-projects>:
 - A Curriculum Vitae, including their skills and educational and career trajectory and their place of residence and place of main activities (work, studies, etc.) in 3 preceding years (maximum 3 pages, font 11 or higher)
 - University Qualification transcripts (grades).
 - A personal statement, explaining their motivation (up to 1 page, font 11 or higher)
 - A statement letter addressing your research interests in relation to the specific research project “In quest of the human dimensions of MEDiterranean Marine Biodiversity” offered by the ISSI of the UM
 - The name and contact details of two referees who can comment on your skills, experience, and suitability for postgraduate research (referees will only be contacted for candidates invited to interview)
 - A one-page outline of the proposed research questions, approach and research design of your PhD project building on the project description offered by the ISSI “In quest of the human dimensions of MEDiterranean Marine Biodiversity”

Applications should be received by not later than **Friday, 31st May 2024**. Below is the tentative recruitment process timeline:

- Interviews: 10-15 June 2024 (online)
- Final results: by the end of June 2024
- Contract starting day: 1 October 2024 (total duration 36 months)
- PhD Enrolment: 1 October 2024.

Late applications will not be considered.

8. Further information may be obtained from <http://www.um.edu.mt/hrmd/recruitment> and should you have any queries, please send us an email on projects.hrmd@um.edu.mt.

Office of the University,
Msida, 18th April 2024



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MEDiterranean Marine Biodiversity**

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Further Information

1. Coordinated by the UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA (UNIMIB), MEDiverSEAty is a transnational project based on several local case studies with the aim of filling these gaps, through the implementation of a Doctoral Network Training and Research Program in 6 European countries (IT, ES, FR, EL, ME, MT), a novelty in the educational and scientific panorama of marine science and biodiversity management. MEDiverSEAty develops an international, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral Training Program for 10 PhD Candidates who, in a medium-term perspective, will form a community of early career researchers trained in the study of marine biodiversity, via joint research projects in both academic and non-academic settings, with local and network training, open science and complementary skills. The project is based on two key pillars of contemporary marine sciences, policies and education, with an interdisciplinary approach that tackles the barriers that continue to exist among the biological sciences, the humanities and social sciences, and the study of environmental governance: Ocean Literacy and Marine Biodiversity Conservation. The scientific research objectives of MEDiverSEAty are to develop a common theoretical framework of Mediterranean Marine Biodiversity Conservation which integrates human and biological dimensions and implications, to foster the crucial role of human dimensions in the protection and conservation of Marine Biodiversity and to make Biodiversity the focus of Mediterranean Ocean Literacy. Further information may be obtained by contacting Dr Stefano Moncada at stefano.moncada@um.edu.mt.
2. Successful candidates will be hired as Early-Stage Researchers (Research Support Officers - RSOs) in the first instance, and are expected to enrol as doctoral candidates of the University of Malta within the first few months of their employment. The successful candidates will form part of the Islands and Small States Institute Studies, focusing on research on “*In quest of the human dimensions of MEDiterranean Marine Biodiversity*”. The candidates will be expected to:
 - perform independently scientific research within a collaborative international research consortium;
 - deliver written reports of your research on a regular basis;
 - prepare a doctoral thesis on the topic of solidarity in diversity;
 - publish scientific articles related to the research project;
 - support the valorisation of research results into tangible deliverables;

- participate in, and contribute to, scientific meetings and conferences, presenting your research to the scientific community;
 - actively participate in outreach activities aimed at promoting your research to a wider audience;
 - collaborate with the other members of the consortium to advance your research and training;
 - participate in the tailor-made training programme;
 - The selected candidate might opt to be seconded to one of the research locations agreed by the MEDiverSEAty project consortium, for which length of stay and location shall be agreed and endorsed by the supervisory team of the Early-Stage Researchers (PhD candidate); and
 - They will also be expected to write and defend a doctoral dissertation leading to the award of a PhD. The PhD supervisory team will include, among others, Dr Stefano Moncada (University of Malta), Prof. Marie Briguglio, Prof. Alan Deidun and Dr Jonathan Spiteri (University of Malta). Further members of the supervisory team can be appointed at a later stage and depending on the specific research objectives.
3. Candidates who have completed their Master or their first degree in an institution where English is not the language of instruction need to present one of the following Secure English Language Test (SELT) results as follows:
- TOEFL Internet-Based (iBT) – minimum 95 with a writing score of at least 24
 - Academic IELTS – minimum 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in each element
 - Advanced Cambridge Certificate at grade C or better.
- The language certificate must not be older than 24 months.
4. The appointees will be expected to work at such places and during such hours as may be determined by the University authorities.
5. The selection procedure will involve:
- a. scrutiny of qualifications and experience claimed and supported by testimonials and/or certificates (copies to be included with the application);
 - b. shortlisting; and
 - b. an interview and / or extended interview.
6. After the deadline for applications, the project supervisor and co-supervisor will draft a shortlist of 5 to 8 candidates. This shortlist will be discussed by representatives of all MEDiverSEAty academic partner institutions. The shortlisted candidates will then be invited for an interview. The ranked candidates will be discussed by representatives of all MEDiverSEAty academic partner institutions, who will assess the gender and geographical balance of the selected candidates and the balance in disciplinary backgrounds across the network.

7. The posts are for a period of three years and are subject to a probationary period and to the provisions of the Statutes, Regulations and Bye-Laws of the University of Malta which are now or which may hereafter be in force. The guaranteed PhD funding is for 36 months (i.e., EC funding). The host institution, in line with the national and university regulation about regular PhD duration, **may** provide additional funding for a maximum of 12 months in order to complete a doctoral degree.
8. Further information can be obtained from the principal supervisor, Dr Stefano Moncada, on (stefano.moncada@um.edu.mt).
 - Information about Doctoral Studies at the University of Malta is available from the UM Doctoral School: <https://www.um.edu.mt/doctoralschool/>.
 - Information about the Islands and Small States Institute Studies is available on (<https://www.um.edu.mt/issi/>).
 - Further information on the MEDiverSEAty project is available at <http://mediverseaty.eu>.

Office of the University,
Msida, 18th April 2024

Prospective PhD Student 1

Title

Marine and terrestrial protected areas to foster climate change adaptation: a sustainable livelihoods approach.

Abstract

This research will assess the role of marine and terrestrial protected areas in fostering climate change adaptation and wellbeing in Malta, including i. identifying climate change hazards, and ii. the extent to which protected areas support the attainment of national and EU commitments to climate change adaptation. It will adopt, *interalia*, a sustainable livelihoods approach to ascertain how, and to what extent, protected areas in Malta contribute to livelihood resources and wellbeing among key users, stakeholders, and broadly the general public. The research will also investigate the extent of climate change adaptation autonomous and planned forms of adaptation.

This research will adopt a mixed methodology, with qualitative participatory focus groups, and quantitative surveys, among users, stakeholders and the general public. Additionally, spatial analysis will also be employed to geo-locate hazards, livelihood resources, wellbeing and measures undertaken to foster climate change adaptation through ecosystem restoration.

The expected outcomes are in the field of climate change and development theories, especially in the field of livelihoods and wellbeing research, and in applied research in the field of planning and management of protected areas in the context of small island states. The outcomes of the research are expected to inform, and possibly guide, policy in the area of climate change, environmental management and communication.

The prospective student will be based at the Islands and Small States Institute and conduct the applied research in the context of the 'Il-Majjistral' National Park.

Supervision

A team of supervisor is envisaged, composed by Dr. Stefano Moncada (for the climate change adaptation and livelihoods research), Dr Jonathan Spiteri (environmental economics and ecosystem valuation); Prof. Alan Deidun (marine biology); Prof. Marie Briguglio (wellbeing, environmental and behavioural economics).

Prospective PhD Student 2

Title

Economics and citizen science: Insights for ecosystem restoration in marine and terrestrial protected areas

Abstract

This research will assess the role of citizen science in contributing to public goods, specifically ecosystem protection and restoration through data collection. It is expected to extend theory in the area of citizen science by drawing on insights from behavioural and environmental economics. Methodologically, the research is expected to involve a review of the state of the art and field/survey experiments to assess under what conditions citizen science yields net benefits to society, policy and science. The research will take place in the context of a specific protected area located in the small island state of Malta, comprising both marine and terrestrial species. Following a systematic literature review, the researcher is expected to devise a programme to involve citizens randomising different treatments to encourage the participation in such actions, including, for instance the role of incentives, rewards and moral obligation. Data collection will involve surveys and actual behavioural analysis including the nudges for participation and the impact of collaboration on citizen wellbeing. The expected outcomes will inform policy in the areas of environmental planning and management, specifically in designing interventions more effectively for citizen participation, thereby contributing to the achievement of National and EU Sustainable Development Goals.

The prospective student will be based at the Islands and Small States Institute and conduct the applied research in the context of the 'Il-Majjistral' National Park.

Supervision

Aa team of supervisor is envisaged, composed of Prof. Marie Briguglio (Behavioural, Environmental Economics), Prof. Alan Deidun (marine biology and citizen science); Dr Jonathan Spiteri (environmental economics); Dr Stefano Moncada (for the climate change adaptation and livelihoods research).