Marine and Terrestrial Protected Areas to Foster Climate Change Adaptation in Islands: A Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

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This PhD project is part of the MEDiverSEAty European Doctoral Network, funded under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant, exploring the human dimensions of Mediterranean marine biodiversity.

In particular, this research intends to investigate the role of marine and terrestrial protected areas in supporting climate change adaptation (CCA) and wellbeing in Malta, focusing on 'Il-Majjistral' National Park. This research aims to identify key climate change hazards and examine how protected areas contribute to Malta's and the EU's CCA commitments. Using a sustainable livelihoods approach, the study will assess how protected areas in Malta can enhance livelihood resources and wellbeing among stakeholders and the wider population, including challenges and obstacles. The project will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative participatory focus groups, quantitative surveys, and spatial analysis. This methodology will geo-locate hazards, identify livelihood resources, and evaluate measures promoting CCA through ecosystem restoration.

Outcomes are expected to contribute to climate change and development theories, particularly regarding livelihoods, wellbeing, and the planning and management of protected areas in small island states. Findings aim to inform policy on climate change adaptation, environmental management, and communication strategies.

By May 28th, the research will have completed a systematic literature review on CCA in small islands, discussing research gaps on the potential of protected areas to foster adaptation and wellbeing, and Malta's current adaptation strategies.