

ISLANDS AND SMALL STATES INSTITUTE - ISSI at the University of Malta

Annual Report

Academic year 2020/2021

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FOREWORDS

Professor Frank Bezzina - Pro-Rector, and Chair of the Islands and Small States Institute Board

This annual report is a true testimony of the hard work and dedication of all the academic and administrative staff at the Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI). The interdisciplinary nature of the work conducted at the ISSI is well reflected in all the several teaching, research and outreach activities presented in this report, which have not only consistently grown in quantity but that have also brought about quality contents and increased interactions with all key stakeholders. I wish another year full of success to the ISSI and I look forward to further activities in the year to come.

Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino - Former Chair of the Islands and Small States Institute Board

I join Pro Rector Professor Bezzina in wishing the Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI) at the University of Malta every success. The Institute is now settling down well under the helm and vision of its new Director. While the Covid-19 pandemic has obliged a reduction in students' ability and willingness to travel, ISSI has still managed to expand its reach by offering a virtual learning platform for its flagship Master's degree by research programme. Additionally, the research and outreach component of ISSI's work has continued steadily, as is evident from this impressive publication.

Dr Stefano Moncada - Director

The Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI) continued to experience a consistent progress over the last year, consolidating, and possibly strengthening, the success of previous terms. This happened in the context of a global Pandemic that forced us to review many of our teaching and research practices, prompting us to adapt, while always keeping up standards and quality of the services offered to our students and partners. Progress occurred across the four pillars at the centre of the vision promoted by the ISSI, specifically, i. teaching, ii. research, iii. outreach and iv. administration. Our actions have a solid local base, expanding to regional and international links, which are without any hesitation the strong advantage point of the ISSI. New agreements with the Maltese Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs, partner universities in other islands and small states and International Organisations ensure a bright, and busy, period for this centre of excellence in islands and small states studies.

1. STAFF AND BOARDS AT THE ISLANDS AND SMALL STATES INSTITUTE

Director of the Institute

Dr Stefano Moncada, stefano.moncada@um.edu.mt

Academic Staff

Prof. Lino Briguglio, lino.briguglio@um.edu.mt

Research and Support Staff

Ms Godianne Montebello (Administrator II), godianne.scicluna@um.edu.mt

Mr Dominik Kalweit (Research Support Officer), dominik.kalweit@um.edu.mt

Mr William Grech (Research Support Officer), william.grech@um.edu.mt

Chairs of the Islands and Small States Institute Board

Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino, godfrey.baldacchino@um.edu.mt (until 30 June 2021)

Prof. Frank Bezzina, frank.bezzina@um.edu.mt (from 1 July 2021)

Islands and Small States Institute Board Members

Prof. Frank Bezzina (Chair)

Dr Stefano Moncada (Director)

Prof. Lino Briguglio (Scholar of Repute)

Prof. Roderick Pace (Senate Appointee)

Prof. Saviour Formosa (Scholar of Repute)

Dr Ing. Charles Yousif (Scholar of Repute)

Dr Marie Avellino (Council Appointee)

Dr Valentina Cassar (Scholar of Repute)

Perit Raphael Axiak (Academic Staff Representative)

Mr Luca Nguyen (Student Representative)

Board of Studies of the M.A. (RISS)

Dr Stefano Moncada (Director)

Prof. Lino Briguglio

Dr Ing. Charles Yousif

Mr Luca Nguyen (Student representative)

Doctoral Academic Committee of the ISSI

Dr Stefano Moncada (Director)

Professor Lino Briguglio

Dr Ing. Charles Yousif

Dr Valentina Cassar

2. TEACHING AT THE ISLANDS AND SMALL STATES INSTITUTE

The ISSI offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the area of islands and small states studies. The strong interdisciplinary nature of our courses makes it attractive for many students, who are joining from a variety of disciplines, and ultimately support teaching and research in islands and small states studies to become more mainstream.

2.1. Undergraduate courses

With two undergraduate courses offered at diploma level, the ISSI provides both a general training on '*Gozo Studies*', and one more specific on '*Lace Studies*'.

2.1.1. Diploma in Gozo Studies

This level 5 course runs over two years (four semesters), and it carries a total of 60 ECTS. This diploma is split into three modules: economics and environmental studies, history and culture. The students are provided with a variety of teaching methods that are utilised during the course programme, including lectures, field-visits, seminars and home assignments. The course aims at linking past and present realities in Gozo with various academic disciplines, offering a strong interdisciplinary perspective. This course has the additional objective of improving students' communication skills, stimulating teamwork, and enabling all participants to develop useful career skills such as sourcing and inferring quantitative/qualitative data, critical evaluation of social and economic realities, and interpretation of historical information. During the academic year 2020-2021, the diploma course was not offered due to insufficient number of students applying.

However, a process of restructuring and revamping of this diploma has started, updating contents and expertise, including an active collaboration with Gozo's regional authorities that will likely increase the number of students, with the aim of re-opening the diploma in the academic year 2022-2023.

2.1.2. Diploma in Lace Studies

The diploma in '*Lace Studies*' teaches the Gozitan tradition of lace making and weaving. The study units offered by this course range from the history of lace, economic aspects, needle lacing and lace textiles, to the conservation and restoration of textiles, management for small businesses, and advanced lace design, to name a few. Students can demonstrate their theoretical and practical knowledge of lace studies through two projects for the respective year of studies. In fact, this level 5 diploma runs over two years (four semesters), and it carries a total of 60 ECTS. During the academic year 2020-2021 the diploma course was not offered due to insufficient number of students applying.

2.2. Postgraduate courses

The ISSI offers a taught M.A., a M.A. by research, and a Ph.D. programme. The taught M.A. in Islands and Small States Studies has been offered since the inception of the ISSI, almost 30 years ago, and has trained a sizeable number of students both in Malta and abroad. During the past three years, this taught M.A. course started to be restructured, with the aim of updating some of its study units, and to also allow single study units to be offered to the general public. We envisage this option to be fully operational from academic year 2022/2023.

The M.A. by research was introduced for the first time in the academic year 2018-2019, and has been running since then, increasing the number of students year by year, and showing an excellent capacity to attract students from Malta, Gozo, but especially internationally. In fact, the percentage of foreign students has been keeping constant with over 70 percent enrolling from outside Malta.

The Ph.D. programme in Islands and Small States Studies, unique in the world, was also recently restructured and aligned with some of the teaching offered through the M.A. by research. This is allowing all Ph.D. students to follow those same study units being taught in the M.A. by research, with the aim of receiving a proper background in islands and small states studies, and to solidify their basis in research design and methodology.

2.2.1. Master of Arts in Islands and Small State Studies

This postgraduate course carries 90 ECTS, in line with the EU *Bologna Process*, and runs on a part-time basis over the course of two years (5 semesters).

The Master of Arts in Islands and Small States Studies is offered at both the University of Malta Main Campus and the Gozo Campus. The aim of the programme is to impart knowledge on islands and small states issues and to provide the opportunity for students to conduct research on the same issues by submitting assignments and writing a dissertation. This MA course was recently revamped, and new study units created to reflect both the evolution in the research area of islands and small states studies, but also to allow single study units to be followed by the general public, and with the option of providing training to both public and private entities interested in this specific programme.

2.2.2. Master of Arts (Research on Islands and Small States)

This specific blended postgraduate programme was designed with research as the first outcome of a training path that aims at enhancing the knowledge of the students on islands and small states matters. The course is intended to be interdisciplinary and relates to economic, social, environmental, and political issues associated with islands and small states. The different study units offered by the programme are designed so as to strengthen the capacities of the students to understand and identify the advantages and constraints

associated with small country size and insularity. The programme enhances the students' capacities for thinking, reasoning, conceptualizing, and assessing key theoretical, and applied, aspects relating to islands and small states, thus, additionally, contributing to their intellectual development.

Table 1. Programme of studies of the M.A. by Research

Study Unit Code	Title	ECTS
ISS5200	Introduction to the Study of Islands and Small States 1: Economic and Environmental Issues	5
ISS5210	Introduction to the Study of Islands and Small States 2: Social and Political Issues	5
ISS5220	Research Methodology	10
ISS5230	Dissertation	70

Students of this programme are required to attend lectures (face-to-face and/or online, depending on public health measures and the availability of suitable rooms) at the University for a three-week intense period at the beginning of October, to then be expected to continue with their studies via online platforms provided by the University, and properly supervised by lecturers and academic coordinators in this blended journey.

Since the academic year 2018-2019, this M.A. by Research has been the main programme offered by the ISSI, given its capacity to attract students from abroad, and the strong research component that is also appealing for those students who would like to continue in their doctoral studies.

Table 2. Historical overview of students enrolled in the M.A. by Research

Academic Year	Students
2018-2019	3
2019-2020	5
2020-2021	5

2.2.3. Ph.D. Programme

The ISSI is proud to offer the only, to date, Doctoral programme in the world that specializes in islands and small states studies. This programme requires all students who have not graduated from the M.A. by research offered by our Institute, to follow three preparatory study units (the same offered within the M.A. by research programme), in order to receive proper training on environmental, economic, social and political aspects of islands and small states. Additionally, students are required to follow a research methodology unit, to sharpen research design and explore research methods through theoretical and practical training offered by ISSI academic personnel.

The ISSI also recognises the excellent work being undertaken by the University of Malta Doctoral School, whereby with continuous training opportunities being offered to all doctoral candidates, and with administrative support to our offices, ensures that the growing student community is well served and prepared for their research.

Table 3. Historical overview of students enrolled in the ISSI Doctoral programme

Academic Year	Students
2018-2019	0
2019-2020	2
2020-2021	3

2.3. Testimonials from ISSI Students

Students are at the core of ISSI's mission, and our efforts are always undertaken to ensure that excellent quality, in both the contents of the training and the relations that occur, is provided in a timely and responsible manner.

The testimonials below show the impact that the ISSI has had on the students' path to improve their educational attainments. They are also a testimony of the many positive impacts and inputs that the ISSI was able to receive from all its students.

2.3.1. Master of Arts Students

– Duncan Cassar, from Malta.

“Having a full-time job and a two-year-old child, I certainly did not plan to engage in any studies, let alone a Master's degree. Yet, when I came across this course, I was struck by its flexibility and helpful staff. Reluctantly at first, I decided to enrol and what a journey it turned out to be! Lecturers are literally walking libraries and lectures were enjoyable and well-paced. Despite the course being internet-based, there was no hindrance in communication and all study material was at our disposal online. In a nutshell, the staff did their utmost to give their students an incredible academic experience and for that I am thankful.”



Picture 1. Duncan Cassar, M.A. by research student (2020-2021)

– Kendra King Snagg, from St Vincent and the Grenadines

“I am pursuing a Master of Arts on Islands and Small States (by Research) and I must say that this has been an intense and rewarding experience. I appreciate the support provided by our professors and my fellow colleagues that helped our sessions feel welcoming and comfortable. I must applaud the Director of the Islands and Small States Institute who remains a strong source of support making this journey much easier. The programme is well organized

and considerate to its learners. I can say that holistically the experience of studying with the University of Malta has been an enriching one.”



Picture 2. Kendra King Snagg, MA by research student (2020-2021)

– Matthew Charlery-Smith, from England/Jamaica

“The Master’s by Research in Islands and Small States has been a very informative and eye-opening course for me, especially as a person who has lived and worked on some of the world’s smallest island states. The specialist tutors had a lot of personal experience with these regions and helped students to see the world’s small and island countries as more than just offshore tax havens, tourist traps or isolated and forgotten places. This Master’s has emphasised that every place, whether habited or uninhabited, has a unique cultural, environmental, geopolitical, and sociological role to contribute to our world and its destiny”.



Picture 3. Matthew Charlery-Smith, M.A. by research student (2020-2021)

2.3.2. Ph.D. Students

– Georges Marc Nicette, from Seychelles

“Enrolling on the Ph.D. programme was the right choice, which I do not regret, studying something I wanted to for a long time. Although the lectures were block and extensive, the lecturers’ deliverables were of very high standards, challenging my thinking, encouraging an

in-depth critical approach to studying small states. The programme is very relevant and provides valuable knowledge that I found beneficial for me professionally and personally, enhancing my lecturing style, making learning more fun for the students. Indeed, my supervisors and administrator from the institute provide great encouragement and support throughout, answering and responding to all queries, giving me the confidence to continue the programme.”



Picture 4. Georges Marc Nicette, Ph.D. candidate (2020-2021)

– Theresia Penda Choppy, from Seychelles

“My experience with the Islands and Small States programme started on very good footing in October 2019 when I had a hands-on introduction that covered all aspects of small island states as well as research tools and methodology. I then moved on to the M.Phil. programme, which again, was very hands on, and really prepared me to move on to the Ph.D. programme. I am grateful that I have been provided with different supervisors, each with expertise in a different aspect of my research. The Doctoral School also does an excellent job of keeping all students engaged.”



Picture 5. Theresia Penda Choppy, Ph.D. candidate (2019-2020)

– Thuan Luca Nguyen Dinh, from Italy

“The ISSI program has allowed me to explore and learn in a completely different direction from my previous studies. The variety of classes and knowledgeable faculty makes studying in a new discipline interesting, informative, challenging and rewarding. The availability of distance learning classes and the support that I have received throughout the program allowed me to balance my responsibilities at work and at school, making my time a wonderful experience.”



Picture 6. Thuan Luca Nguyen Dinh, Ph.D. candidate (2019-2020)

2.4. List of all lecturers teaching with ISSI

The ISSI collaborates with academic staff from several Faculties/School/Institute/Centres based at the University of Malta, in order to provide the most appropriate expertise in the teaching and in the research areas of our students. The ISSI has one full-time academic placed at the Institute, Dr Stefano Moncada, and Prof. Briguglio also contributing with a part-time

TR4 position. An important contribution towards all the lectures, supervisions, and participation to the ISSI boards, comes from academic personnel placed in other Faculties/School/Institute/Centres, and without which the ISSI could not be in a position to provide the necessary inputs towards the teaching and research programmes, and for this the Director and the Chair are truly grateful to those who are contributing.

The current list of lecturers servicing the ISSI:

- Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino
- Prof. Lino Briguglio
- Prof. Patrick J. Schembri
- Prof. Roderick Pace
- Prof. Saviour Formosa
- Dr George Vital Zammit
- Dr Karl Agius
- Dr Michael Briguglio
- Perit Raphael Axiak
- Ms Glorianne Camilleri
- Dr Margaret Camilleri Fenech
- Dr Francesco Sindico

2.4.1. Testimonials from ISSI academics

Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino

“I much enjoy the ‘eureka’ moments when students from other small states, so far from Malta, suddenly realise that the study units offered by the ISSI are not just interesting and offer a breath of fresh air to various topics in the social and natural sciences: they are actually relevant and speak convincingly to their own predicament in their own small country. Since Malta is both an archipelago and a small state, the ISSI at the University of Malta is strategically well placed to serve as a clearinghouse of scholarship, education and training that critiques, or even does away with, the implicit continental/large country bias of most curricula, disciplinary canons and textbooks.”



Picture 7. Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino

Prof. Lino Briguglio

“My experience as a lecturer in connection with the course leading to the M.A. in research on islands and small states was a very positive one. The students are, generally speaking, very receptive when I discuss the vulnerability and resilience framework with them, often finding it relevant to the country they come from. I also teach a study unit relating to quantitative techniques. Students who are not keen on numbers often find this study unit challenging, but on completion of the lecture sessions I generally find that these students realize that knowledge of some basic quantitative techniques would be useful for their dissertation. I also supervise Master’s dissertations and Ph.D. theses, which I enjoy doing. The ISSI courses are well organised, thanks to the Director of the Institute and his staff. I am sure that the future bodes well for the Institute, and as its former Director, I am very pleased that its direction is in safe hands.”



Picture 8. Prof. Lino Briguglio

Dr George Vital Zammit

“Teaching on the Islands and Small States postgraduate programme has been an immensely rewarding experience for me. I treasured the multinational presence and the learning environment that brought together students from different time zones, engaged and committed to contribute to lectures. Students sharing their own unique realities made the sessions stimulating, while engagement with both theory and practice facilitated the application of concepts in politics and policy-making. The pleasure and satisfaction were confirmed when reading the students’ work in the various assessments. Students not only showed critical thinking, but deployed a keen disposition to hone their skills into high level research.”



Picture 9. Dr George Vital Zammit

3. RESEARCH AT THE ISLANDS AND SMALL STATES INSTITUTE

The ISSI proudly hosts three research platforms (Climate, Health, Tourism), which represent a crucial part of our research activities and places the ISSI as a centre of excellence for those broad research areas, contributing both to academia and policy.

3.1. WHO Collaborating Centre on Health Systems and Policies in Small States

Since 2017, the Islands and Small States Institute has been designated as a World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre on Health Systems and Policies in Small States, thanks to its notable track record of top-level policy research on resilience, economy, environment, and health in small states, implemented through the ISSI's Small States Health Platform (SSHP). Its main objectives are to conduct research and assist in capacity building on matters relating to small states health systems, and to collaborate with faculties and institutes both locally and overseas for this purpose. The SSHP was administered and guided by a Board led by Prof. Natasha Azzopardi Muscat, who since moving to her new position as a Director of WHO in Copenhagen, has been replaced by Prof. Neville Calleja and Dr Stefano Moncada.

The global health crisis sparked by COVID-19 gave the ISSI's SSHP an opportunity to host a webinar on the topic "*Coronavirus pandemic: what makes small island states (SIS) more vulnerable, what more resilient?*" on 2 September 2020. Applying the Vulnerability and Resilience Framework (V&RF) developed by the ISSI's former Director, Prof. Lino Briguglio, and based on the evaluation of data available on how SIS are coping with the pandemic, the webinar focused on case studies from Malta, Iceland and non-European SIS. More information can be found below in the Outreach & Communication section of this report. More information is available on the website

<https://www.um.edu.mt/platforms/smallstateshealth>

The ISSI has submitted its application to be re-designated as a WHO Collaborating Centre, and the results will be announced in November/December 2021.

3.2. Climate Change Platform

Established in 2016, the main objectives of the Climate Change Platform (CCP) are to facilitate collaboration between University of Malta entities and individual academics interested in climate change issues, and to promote research and teaching initiatives relating to climate change. The CCP is guided and overseen by a Steering Committee chaired by Prof. Simone Borg (outgoing), with Prof. Maria Attard as vice- chair, and Dr Stefano Moncada as the CCP focal point. The other members of the Committee are Prof. Lino Briguglio, Dr Charles Galdies, Prof. Paul J. Pace and Dr Ing. Charles Yousif. The CCP has led several consultation processes among University of Malta academics, collecting and collating feedback to key climate change and energy proposed legislation, and to this end submitted comments to government

authorities when carrying out consultation initiatives, including on the forthcoming Malta Low Carbon Development Strategy presented to the Minister for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change. More information is available on the website <https://www.um.edu.mt/platforms/climatechange>

In September 2021, the CCP was officially recognized by Senate and Dr Moncada confirmed as the focal point.

3.3. Island Tourism Platform

The Island Tourism Platform (ITP) was set up in 2017, as a collaborative project between the Islands and Small States Institute and the Institute for Tourism, Travel and Culture (ITTC). Its main objectives are to facilitate collaboration between University of Malta entities and individual academics interested in island tourism issues and to promote research and teaching initiatives relating to island tourism at the University of Malta and elsewhere. The ITP is administered and guided by a Steering Committee composed of Dr Marie Avellino (Director of the ITTC) as chair, Prof. Lino Briguglio (member of the ISSI) as vice-chair of the ITP, and Prof. Carmel Cassar (ITTC), Dr Marie Louise Mangion (Department of Public Policy), Prof. Andrew Jones (ITTC), and Mr Julian Zarb (tourism consultant) as members.

One outcome of the collaboration between the ISSI and the ITTC, through the ITP, was the publication of three studies relating to overtourism and environmental governance, all authored by Prof. Briguglio and Dr Avellino. The first is a 2019 article titled *Has overtourism reached the Maltese Islands?* (2019, Occasional Papers on Islands and Small States ISSN 1024-6282, Issue: 2019/01), and the other two are chapters in books namely “Overtourism, Environmental Degradation and Governance in Small Islands with Special Reference to Malta” [Chapter 17 in *Shaping the Future of Small Islands*, Palgrave Macmillan (2020)], and “Assessing Malta’s Overtourism” [Chapter 10 in *Managing Events, Festivals and the Visitor Economy: Concepts, Collaborations and Cases*, Cabi (2021), in print].

Another outcome of the setting up of the ITP is the introduction by the ITTC of a study unit titled “Island Tourism”, at the undergraduate and Master’s levels. In these study units, the special characteristics of small islands are highlighted, leading to relatively high economic benefits and also to environmental degradation, given the limited carrying capacity and the fragile ecosystem of many small islands. The successful collaboration between the ISSI and the ITTC has therefore led to beneficial initiatives, more of which are being planned. More information is available on the website

<https://www.um.edu.mt/platforms/islandtourism>

3.4. EU Marie Curie applications

The ISSI has published a call for expression of interest for the 2021 *EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship*, in the area of ‘Vulnerability and Post-Pandemic Resilience in

Islands and Small State Economies'. Among the 20+ applications received, the two most promising were selected, and the researchers supported to submit important research projects that could advance knowledge in key areas of post-pandemic recovery and resilience. Below is a short summary of the two applications.

3.4.1. Dr Pedro Pombo, Portugal - 'ECO-Heritages'

Dr Pombo's proposal investigates the role of cultural heritages in promoting local economic development and sustaining social and environmental resiliencies, in the context of Small Island States (SIS), Small Island and Developing States (SIDS), and Sub-National Island Jurisdictions (SNIJs) located in Europe, the African Continent and in the Indian Ocean.

With the objective of establishing dialogues between the fields of anthropology, heritage, environment, development and island studies, this research enables operative disciplinary bridges to address socioeconomic and environmental vulnerabilities in insular and archipelagic contexts in face of climate change. Being extremely vulnerable to climate change due to their small territorial area and particular exposure to sea-level rise, small islands and archipelagos became crucial case studies for its consequences in a global scenario. While climate change affects cultural and natural contexts, heritage management and indigenous cultures may provide answers to this situation through traditionally established cultural systems that integrate ecological preservation, the sustainability of the natural resources and social development.

The results of this research are aimed to inform operational programs in the context of SIS, SIDS, and island SNIJs promoting the integration of heritagisation processes and indigenous knowledge systems in actions for sustainable futures. Furthermore, this research addresses the pressing challenge, at a European and global level, of developing expertise to promote effective responses to mitigate the social, economic and ecological consequences of climate change. The research team supporting Dr Pombo is formed by Dr Moncada, Prof. Briguglio and Prof. Baldacchino.

3.4.2. Dr Shalini Sharma, India - 'Circular Island - Malta' (CIRISMA)

The environment in many islands is vulnerable to a variety of negative externalities and challenges which may have serious repercussions for economic and social well being. Yet economic and social wellbeing also depends on GDP growth and business success – often the very sources of these externalities. The impending climate crises, restrictions of movement due to Covid-19, limited land resources, market fluctuations, high transportation costs and aggravating resource scarcity, call for a new and different way to visualise economic success: The 'Circular Economy' is the key model.

Malta, a small island state and part of the European Union (EU), has committed itself to the EU Green Deal, the Circular Economy Action Plan, as well as other EU goals, presenting an

ideal case study to assess the transition to a circular economy in a small island state context. Here, the imminent need for a clear economic strategy and the participation of business as key stakeholders also presents a policy-driven justification for research. This project, entitled Circular Islands Malta (CIRISMA) will address the issues pertaining to circularity in islands focusing on the raw materials value chain. The sector of focus will be the electronics equipment sector in Malta, one of Malta's top ten exports and where Malta is facing challenges in relation to waste. The project aims to understand the enablers and barriers to circularity in islands to develop circular systems to enable continued production in islands, and to enhance profitable investment, enable stable GDP and job creation while supporting governance to transform Malta as a circular island. These replicable models will contribute to the achievement of the EU Green Deal (Raw Materials value chain), the Circular Economy Action Plan, and the EU's Cohesion Policy and Sustainable Development Goals. The research team supporting Dr Pombo is formed by Dr Marie Briguglio and Dr Moncada.

3.5. Students from the M.A. by Research

The research below is the result of the 30,000 words dissertation that ISSI students delivered at the end of the academic year 2020-2021. Some of the research summarised below is being presented at international conferences and in the process of being submitted to international journals.

3.5.1. Duncan Cassar – 'A retrospective study of teenage pregnancy and its repercussions in small island states: A focus on Malta'

This dissertation aims at gaining an understanding about the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy as seen through the eyes of former teenage mothers. It seeks to gain knowledge from their experiences about the leading causes and their coping strategies within an island context. A thorough definition and sociological factors associated with this phenomenon will be provided in the literature review. Furthermore, although this research focuses on Malta, this study puts forward a general analysis of teenage pregnancy throughout several states hailing from all the continents. Ultimately, it seeks to understand whether an island mentality contributes to social constructions of teenage mothers. Prof. Joanne Cassar and Dr Valerie Visanish were the supervisors.

3.5.2. Kendra King Snagg – 'Disaster risk reduction to multi-hazards in small island developing states: The case of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines'

This research addresses disaster risk reduction policies and multi-hazard frameworks in the context of the Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS), with a focus on the small state of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG). Many SIDS are vulnerable to hazardous events because of their characteristics of being remote, small, and susceptibility to external shocks. SVG is one such small island state that is faced with multiple hazardous events. There is therefore a need for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) measures to be in place for such islands to

be able to withstand the impacts of these hazards. This research aims to investigate frameworks on DRR in multi-hazardous situations in SIDS and the extent of implementation of DRR measures in SVG, through a Systematic Literature Review and a content analysis of national budgets spanning from 2012 to 2021. The results show that there is a progressive increase in the mentions and allocations of budgetary sums to DRR. There are, however, key DRR terms and concepts that are conspicuously absent from the budgets such as risk assessment, risk awareness and education, linked to multi-hazards, which suggests that a lack of adequate measures, and corresponding funding, is to be registered. This study may be useful to guide policy in the area of DRR measures in SVG and support further research in the area of multi-hazards in SIDS. Dr Moncada and Prof. Saviour Formosa were the supervisors.

3.5.3. Matthew Charlery-Smith – ‘Musical traditions and Commonwealth societies: Envisioning a commercially empowering multiculturalism for small states’

The main objective of this dissertation is to examine the commerciality of music traditions and how the existence of multiculturalism unifies people to expand and appreciate them. This research also provides insight into locally performed but lesser globally known native and popular music artists, musicians, and traditions within Commonwealth member states/societal groups. The aim is to examine through participant interaction how different native styles are perceived and the degree of commercial potential they have, with the intention of suggesting innovative ways of platforming them that can achieve an empowering level of critical acclaim and global recognition. The research explores the successful implementation of any suggested policies that would socioeconomically strengthen Commonwealth small states and, as a result, the Commonwealth as a whole. By using examples from social media trends, historical communications archives (TV, radio, literature, news etc.), Western social and music history, the US recording industry and successful Commonwealth projects, the research intends to demonstrate how the bloc can be a progressive, protective and powerful tool to support the development of indigenous communities, small states and the often-unexplored cultures within them. Prof. Baldacchino was the main supervisor.

3.5.4. Ben Biedermann - ‘Virtual Asset Deployment in Small Island States: The Case of Malta’

Since the inception of virtual assets, regulatory approaches by small island states have been marginalised and discredited for enabling the blockchain industry. Without being formally connected to the discourse on small states as financial centres, the literature on virtual asset regulation has reinforced the narrative of small islands as risky, lacking transparency, and vulnerable to financial crime. This research challenges some of the findings from literature in the field of financial services in the context of small island states, and building on the case of Malta discusses findings that possibly suggest a new narrative.

This research adopts a mixed-method approach, analysing the Virtual Financial Assets Act (VFAA) adopted in Malta and the European Commission’s proposal of the Directive on

Markets in Crypto-Assets (MiCA). By initially focusing on a specific case study island, a standardised research approach prevalent in small island state studies was taken. We then introduced methods of computer linguistics to assess legislations, and map themes and prevalent patterns. Informed by the theory of small-scale flexible specialisation the results led to a keyword query, which guided the qualitative document analysis of the VFAA and MiCA.

Our results confirm that Malta's self-proclamation as blockchain island was not an announcement leading to laissez-faire regulation, but it prompted a regulation of virtual assets that is viable and competitive within the EU financial market. Furthermore, in parts of the directive proposed by the European Commission, we find that the legislation adopted in Malta can be regarded as a blueprint for virtual asset regulation, as set out by MiCA. For small island state studies, the findings imply the need to further review the mainstream narrative in literature on financial assets that depicts islands mostly negatively. This paper also points to the need of having further research on how other small island states regulate this new class of financial assets, in order to shed further light on both the hegemonic narrative on islands, and whether virtual assets promote investments and provide long-lasting development opportunities for islands. Dr Moncada was the main supervisor.

3.6. Ph.D. research themes

3.6.1. Georges Marc Nicette – 'Understanding lived experiences of former heroin users and discourses surrounding heroin use in a Small Island Developing State (SIDS): The case of Seychelles'

This sociological study aims to explore the lived experiences of former heroin users and related discourses associated with heroin use in Seychelles. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Seychelles is one of the most affected SIDS by the heroin pandemic, suffering from the highest rate of heroin use per capita globally (APDAR 2021; UNODC, 2019), representing 5.6% of the population, almost 11% of the working force. Despite a large amount of literature on heroin use and its effect on society, there is a lack of research in understanding heroin use in SIDS context, a gap limiting policy debates and interventions. This research intends to address these shortcomings, inviting a rethinking of drug policy by bringing the stories and surrounding construction of heroin discourses within policy debates and practices. Mr Nicette's supervisory team is formed by Dr Michael Briguglio (main), Dr Stefano Moncada (co-supervisor), and Prof. Marilyn Clark (advisor). Mr Nicette will likely have his upgrade assessment from M.Phil. to Ph.D. in January/February 2022.

3.6.2. Theresia Penda Choppy – 'Creativity and creolization in Seychellois creole folktales'

The research is based on small island states from the perspective of plantation islands and creolization, with a particular focus on the student's home archipelago, the Seychelles. The

selection of folktales as the corpus for this study was undertaken given the proper contextualization of such material into the theoretical framework and hypothesis. In short, creole folktales illustrate their people's diasporic origins, the creolization process, and the creation of a new social identity in each creole community. Being islands has also influenced the particularities of each island creole community. Ms Choppy's supervisory team is formed by Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino (main), Prof. Dominique Lanni (co-supervisor), and Prof. Ray Fabri (advisor). Ms Choppy has successfully undertaken her upgrade from M.Phil. to Ph.D. and is in her final year of studies.

3.6.3. Thuan Luca Nguyen Dinh – 'From Overtourism to Undertourism: Small Island States and the COVID-19 Pandemic'.

This doctoral research explores the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector in small island states and the response and resilience enacted to withstand the crisis. COVID-19 consequences have been severe in touristic small island states. This vulnerability would confirm the traditional view that small islands are fragile. However, past global crises have shown that small island states are resilient. This research intends to contribute to the debate whether this resilience is policy-driven and planned by the government (top-down) or it is due to the innate resourcefulness of the collective action of individuals, firms and the society (bottom-up) and how it applies to the COVID-19 situation. Mr Nguyen's supervisory team is formed by Prof. Lino Briguglio (main) and Dr Stefano Moncada (co-supervisor). Mr Nguyen has successfully undertaken his upgrade from M.Phil. to Ph.D. and is in his final year of studies.

3.7. Research projects

3.7.1. SUNRISE – 'Situated Understanding of Resilience in Island Societies and Environments'

The Islands and Small States Institute is a partner in the project 'SUNRISE: Situated Understanding of Resilience in Island Societies and Environments', led by Birkbeck, University of London and financed by the UK NERC Global Partnerships Seedcorn Fund (GPSF). Other partners are the University of the Sunshine Coast, the University of the West Indies, and the University of Mauritius.

Through the establishment of an international, interdisciplinary collaboration on island climate resilience, SUNRISE aims to address the following issues:

- 1) Approaches used in global and regional climate impact assessments are often poorly suited to relatively small islands and, especially, atoll countries, given the fundamental mismatches in the spatial scales of knowledge creation and decision-making/action.

2) While the impact of climate change on island places is widely studied, far less attention has been given to the impacts of climate change on the fundamental characteristics of 'islandness', or the consequences of these impacts as transnational and internal interdependence shifts in response to climate and non-climate forcing.

By applying their complimentary skills and expertise, the research team works on developing new approaches that overcome these empirical and conceptual gaps around how islandness is accounted for in data and methodological approaches typically used in climate impact assessments. SUNRISE will then pilot new approaches to explore climate impacts and resilience in contexts which are not usually compared, including North Atlantic and Pacific islands. In doing so, SUNRISE will seek to situate varied, individual examples of place-based climate impacts and resilient practice within the wider context of small islands. This collaboration has already managed to produce some tangible results, by publishing a special issue in the Small States and Territories Journal (out November 2021), and by submitting a research paper in the prestigious climate change journal Wires, currently under a revise and resubmit.

3.7.2. ERASMUS+

Since 2019, the ISSI has been awarded several grants under the Erasmus+ Key Action 107 "International Credit Mobility" (staff mobility for teaching), to foster collaboration between the Institute, as well as the University of Malta, and the University of Mauritius, Queensland University (Australia), the University of West Indies at Cave Hill (Barbados), and the University of Prince Edward Island (Canada). Unfortunately, to date, neither mobility activities from Malta nor to Malta were possible, so far, due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The European Commission extended the deadline for the exchanges to an additional year, and the ISSI is exploring such an opportunity with the research partners.

3.7.3. *Horizon 2020: EcoScope - Ecocentric Management for Sustainable Fisheries and Healthy Marine Ecosystems (H2020 BG-10-2020)*

The ISSI is a partner in the EcoScope Project, led by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, comprising a total of 24 partners and financed through the Horizon 2020 Blue Growth Call 'Fisheries in the full ecosystem context'. EcoScope aims to promote an effective and efficient, ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management.

The project will develop an interoperable platform, a robust decision-making toolbox, a series of online courses and a mobile application. These tools will be available through a single public portal, to promote an efficient, ecosystem-based approach to the management of fisheries and achieve maximum and continuous participation of stakeholders.

The four-year (2021-2025) project addresses ecosystem degradation and anthropogenic impact that cause fisheries to be unsustainably exploited in several European Seas. EcoScope promotes efficient, holistic, sustainable, ecocentric fisheries management that will aid

towards restoring fisheries sustainability and ensuring balance between food security and healthy seas. Further information can be found on the project website: <https://ecoscopium.eu>



Picture 10. H2020 Ecoscope project logo

3.7.4. Vulnerability and Resilience Framework

For a number of years, under leadership of the Institute's former Director, Prof. Lino Briguglio, the ISSI has been working on the Vulnerability and Resilience Framework, which tries to answer the question as to why, in spite of their economic vulnerability, many small island states succeed economically. Their studies found that many small states assign major importance to policies that enable them to withstand their economic vulnerability by building economic resilience. The Framework is being referred to by many international organisations, particularly the Commonwealth Secretariat, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, in their studies and policy reports relating to small states, to argue that these states need to be supported to enable them to strengthen their economic governance for resilience-building purposes.

In their latest contribution to the Institute's broad research work within the Vulnerability and Resilience Framework, Dr Stefano Moncada, the current Director of the Institute, and Prof. Briguglio have published a book with Springer entitled 'Small Island Developing States - Vulnerability and Resilience Under Climate Change'. The book was co-edited with Prof. Hillary Bambrick, Prof. Ilan Kelman, Prof. Catherine Iorns and Prof. Leonard Nurse, world-renowned scholars in different fields of climate change. Including seventeen chapters, the publication explores how vulnerable and resilient communities from SIDS are affected by climate change; proposes and, where possible, evaluates adaptation activities; identifies factors capable of enhancing or inhibiting SIDS people's long-term ability to deal with climate change; and critiques the discourses, vocabularies, and constructions around SIDS dealing with climate change. The contributions, written by well-established scholars, as well as emerging authors and practitioners, in the field, include conceptual papers, coherent methodological approaches, and case studies from the communities based in the Caribbean Sea and the Indian, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans. Dr Moncada and Prof. Briguglio in the introduction, contextualise the book within current literature, emphasizing the importance of stronger links

between climate change science and policy in SIDS, both to increase effectiveness of policy and also boost scholarly enquiry in the context of whose communities are often excluded by mainstream research.

As part of this ongoing research project, Prof. Briguglio and Dr Moncada are planning research papers that aim to update the vulnerability and resilience indices with the most recent data.

4. PUBLICATIONS

The publications listed below are an extract of the most significant publications of the academic staff based at the ISSI.

4.1. Professor Lino Briguglio

Books

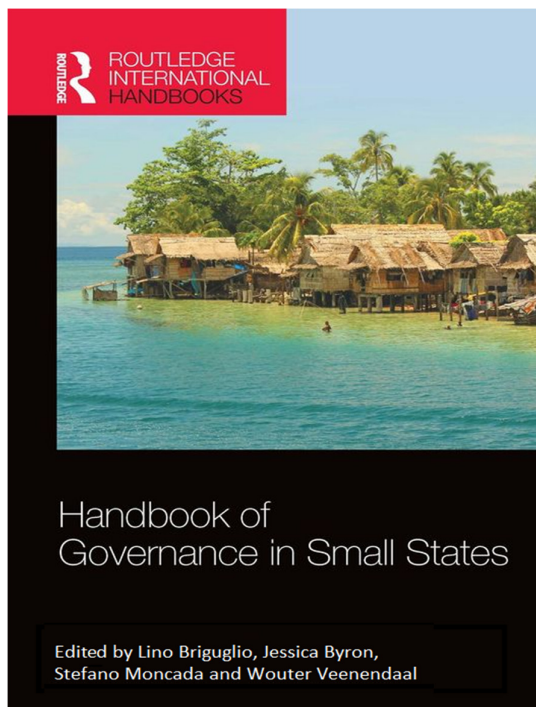
- Briguglio, L., Byron, J., Moncada, S., & Veenendaal, W. (Eds.). (2020). Handbook of governance in small states. Routledge.
- Moncada, S., Briguglio, L., Bambrick, H., Kelman, I., Iorns, C., & Nurse, L. (Eds.). (2021). Small island developing states: Vulnerability and resilience under climate change (Vol. 9). Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-82774-8>

Journals and Articles

- Briguglio, L., Calleja, J., Cauchi, M. N., & Camilleri Rolls, C. (eds.) (2021). The Gozo Observer: Issue 43: Winter 2021.
- Briguglio, L., & Vella, M. (2020). Travel connectivity and climate as factors affecting the Coronavirus infections across countries : with implications for small states. Occasional Papers on Islands and Small States, 2, 1-16

Book chapters:

- Briguglio L., & Avellino, M. (2021) Overtourism, Environmental Degradation and Governance in Small Islands with Special Reference to Malta. In: Roberts J.L., Nath S., Paul S., Madhoo Y.N. (eds) Shaping the Future of Small Islands. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-4883-3_17



Picture 11. Cover of book published in 2020, with Prof. Briguglio as first editor.

4.2. Professor Godfrey Baldacchino

Books

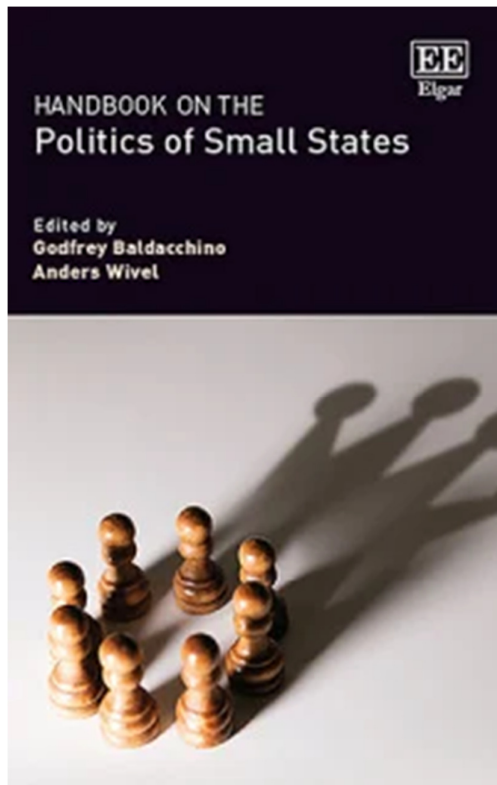
- Baldacchino, G., & Wivel, A. (Eds.). (2020). Handbook on the politics of small states. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Journal Articles

- Baldacchino, G. (2020). Okinawa, Japan and our world of islands. *Okinawan Journal of Island Studies*, 1, 1-9.
- Baldacchino G. (2021). Extra-territorial quarantine in pandemic times. *Political geography*, 85, 102302. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2020.102302>
- Agius, K., Sindico, F., Sajeve, G., & Baldacchino, G. (2021). ‘Splendid isolation’: Embracing islandness in a global pandemic. *Island Studies Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.24043/isj.163>

Book chapters

- Baldacchino, G. (2020). “Together, but not together, together”: the politics of identity in island archipelagos. In Y. Martínez-San Miguel and M. Stephens (Eds.), *Contemporary archipelagic thinking: towards new comparative methodologies and disciplinary formations* (pp. 365-382). Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield International.



Picture 12. Cover of book published in 2020, with Prof. Baldacchino as first editor.

4.3. Dr Stefano Moncada

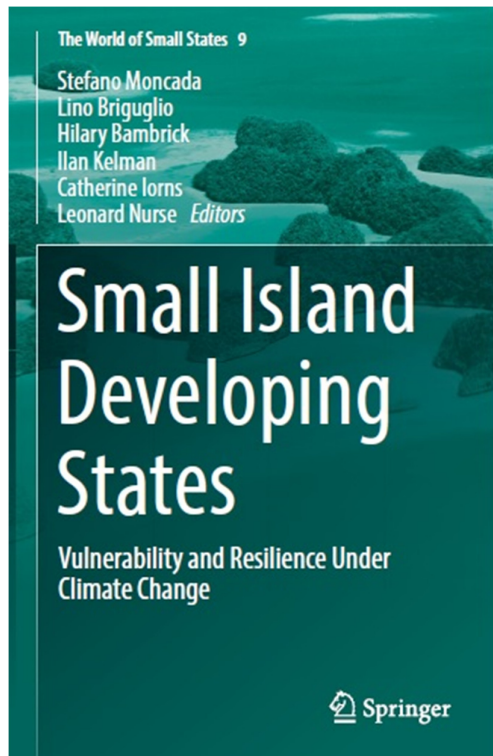
Books

- Moncada, S., Briguglio, L., Bambrick, H., Kelman, I., Iorns, C., & Nurse, L. (Eds.). (2021). *Small island developing states: Vulnerability and resilience under climate change* (Vol. 9). Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-82774-8>

- Briguglio, L., Byron, J., Moncada, S., & Veenendaal, W. (Eds.). (2020). Handbook of governance in small states. Routledge.

Journal Articles

- Cauchi, J. P., Moncada, S., Bambrick, H., & Correa-Velez, I. (2021). Coping with environmental hazards and shocks in Kiribati: Experiences of climate change by atoll communities in the Equatorial Pacific. *Environmental Development*, 37, 100549.
- Filho, W. L., Barbir, J., Sima, M., Kalbus, A., Nagy, G. J., Paletta, A., Villamizar, A., Martinez, R., Azeiteiro, U. M., Pereira, M. J., Mussetta, P. C., Ivars, J. D., Salgueirinho Osório de Andrade Guerra, J. B., de Silva Neiva, S., Moncada, S., Galdies, C., Klavins, M., Nikolova, M., Gogu, R. C., ... Bonoli, A. (2020). Reviewing the role of ecosystems services in the sustainability of the urban environment: A multi-country analysis. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 262, 121338. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.121338>
- Briguglio, M., & Moncada, S. (November, 2020). Malta, COVID-19 Island Insights Series, no 1. University of Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law and Governance, University of Prince Edward Island Institute of Island Studies and Island Innovation, 1-6.



Picture 13. Book cover published in 2021 by Dr Moncada as first editor.

4.4. Small States and Territories Journal (SST)

Small States and Territories (SST) is a scholarly, open-access journal dedicated exclusively to the study of the nature and workings of islands, small sovereign states (however defined) and non-sovereign territories. Launched in 2018, SST has its institutional home at the Islands and Small States Institute. Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino is the editor in chief. The journal is nested within the University of Malta website at: www.um.edu.mt/sst

Vol. 3, No. 2 was published in November 2020 and it included a Special Section on “Gender, politics and development in Pacific small states and territories” made up of a guest editorial and six articles. Another four articles were published together with the usual section presenting book reviews. Vol. 4, No. 1, was published in May 2021 and it included a Special Section on Small States and the ‘Corona crisis’ made up of a guest editorial and seven articles. Two other articles and the section with book reviews completed the issue.

All queries and manuscripts to be considered for publication are to be addressed to: sst@um.edu.mt

4.5. Occasional Papers

The following papers were published in the *Occasional Series* in Islands and Small States Studies, which has been active since 1994.

4.5.1. The Participation of Small States at the Summer Olympic Games - Kevin Joseph Azzopardi

Despite having gone through a marathon eighteen days full of events against all odds due to the pandemic, the glamour of the Summer Olympic Games lived on as the entire world got together in a true show of force and unity with athletes battling it out to the least shot, millimetre and point to return back home as Olympic heroes.

The starting lists and medals’ table have, as in previous editions, served as an ideal platform for the traditional powerhouses in world sport to further demonstrate their dominance with a few surprises making the headlines from time to time. Ever since the inaugural edition of the Games for the Small States of Europe (GSSE) held in 1985 in San Marino, this biennial event became a benchmark for the participating countries to gauge their progress against other similar countries whose population is less than one million inhabitants.

The limitations in having a low population and restricted land area are to be turned into an opportunity to realise sporting potential in a manner through which small state inhabitants do not feel inferior to foreign opponents. Regular international participation will certainly help in continuing to bridge the gap as future athletes continue to dream to make their small state proud and earn the plaudits of national heroes.

4.5.2. The State of Play in Maltese Sport - Andy Grech, Dave Collins and Pippa Chapman

An increasing number of nations around the world are developing high performance sport systems in order to compete in global competitions. Unfortunately, the research on smaller states is somewhat lacking. Furthermore, high performance sport in Malta is also an under-researched theme in local sport literature. The research sought to understand the current ‘state of play’ of elite sport in Malta. Using the Sport Policy Leading to International Sporting Success’ (SPLISS) model as a starting point, the research uses a standardised survey to explore the perceptions of key stakeholders in high performance sport in Malta in terms of current experiences and future expectations.

Measuring perceptions against the SPLISS pillars found dissatisfaction amongst stakeholders: in spite of some useful financial investment in the system, there are structural issues that need to be overcome, some of which are influenced by the macro-level environment of the challenges that Malta faces as a small island state, including lack of infrastructure and loss of human capital. This work provides insight into the current situation of elite sport in Malta, from which further work could be undertaken, and also raises questions about the value of the SPLISS model when investigating small states.

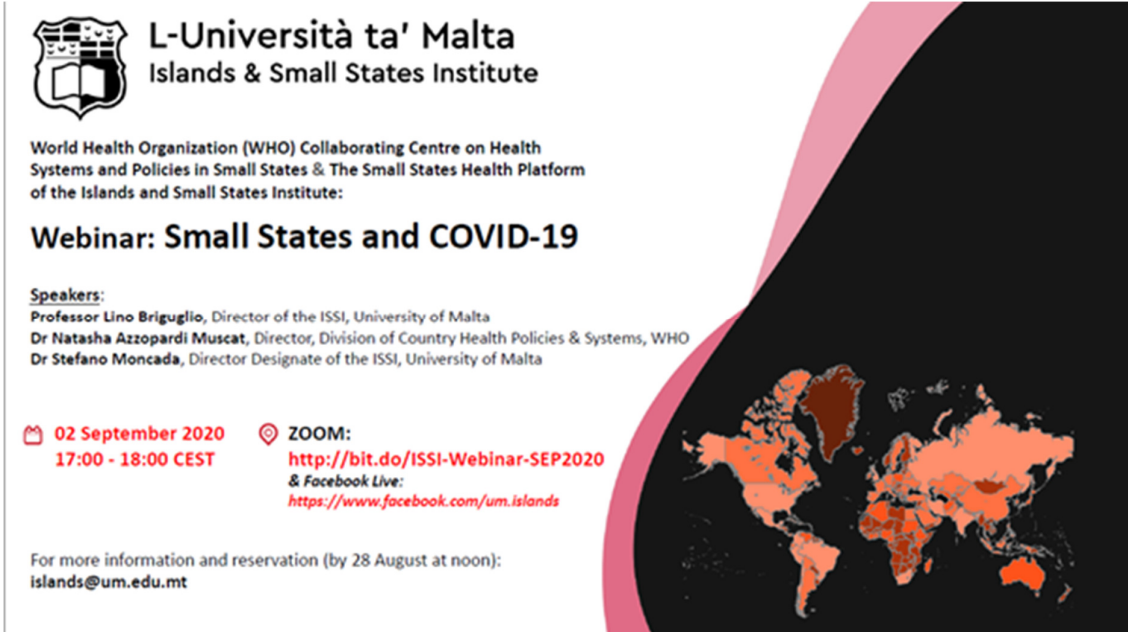
5. OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION

In this section the ISSI's main outreach and communication activities are listed, and links to the specific events provided. The ISSI tries to publicise both its events and those organised by colleagues in Malta and outside, with the aim of increasing the visibility of islands and small states studies.

5.1. Webinars

On 2nd September 2020, the Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI) held a webinar entitled "Small States and COVID-19". The event was hosted on Zoom and also live-streamed on the ISSI's Facebook Page. It was jointly organised by the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre on Health Systems and Policies in Small States, and the Small States Health Platform (SSHP), which are both hosted by the ISSI.

Speakers were Prof. Lino Briguglio, then still Director of the ISSI and world-renowned expert on islands and small states; Dr Natasha Azzopardi Muscat, Director of the Division of Country Health Policies & Systems at the WHO and Coordinator of the SSHP; and Dr Stefano Moncada, at that time Director Designate of the ISSI and Coordinator of the University of Malta's Climate Change Platform.



The poster features the logo of L-Università ta' Malta and the Islands & Small States Institute. It lists the WHO Collaborating Centre on Health Systems and Policies in Small States & The Small States Health Platform of the ISSI. The title is "Webinar: Small States and COVID-19". Speakers listed are Professor Lino Briguglio, Dr Natasha Azzopardi Muscat, and Dr Stefano Moncada. The event is on 02 September 2020, 17:00 - 18:00 CEST. Zoom and Facebook Live links are provided. A world map with orange highlights is on the right. Contact info: islands@um.edu.mt.

L-Università ta' Malta
Islands & Small States Institute

World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre on Health Systems and Policies in Small States & The Small States Health Platform of the Islands and Small States Institute:

Webinar: Small States and COVID-19

Speakers:
Professor Lino Briguglio, Director of the ISSI, University of Malta
Dr Natasha Azzopardi Muscat, Director, Division of Country Health Policies & Systems, WHO
Dr Stefano Moncada, Director Designate of the ISSI, University of Malta

02 September 2020
17:00 - 18:00 CEST

ZOOM:
<http://bit.do/ISSI-Webinar-SEP2020>
& Facebook Live:
<https://www.facebook.com/um.islands>

For more information and reservation (by 28 August at noon):
islands@um.edu.mt

Picture 14. Poster for Webinar organised by the ISSI on Small States and Covid-19

On 4th March 2021, the ISSI invited University staff and students, as well as members of the general public, to a webinar on 'Governance in Small States', which saw the launch of the book 'Handbook of Governance in Small States'. The book was edited by Lino Briguglio, Jessica Byron, Stefano Moncada & Wouter Veenendaal and published by Routledge in December 2020.

The event was chaired by Dr Moncada, whilst Prof. Briguglio provided an overview of the book. Dr Travis Mitchel from the Commonwealth Secretariat held a presentation about political governance, co-editor Prof. Jessica Byron about social governance, Mr Sai Navoti, Chief of the SIDS Unit at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs discussed environmental governance, whilst Dr Cyrus Rustomjee from the Independent Evaluation Office of the International Monetary Fund spoke about economic governance. Co-editor and friend of the ISSI Dr Wouter Veenendaal provided his reflections about the issues addressed. The event was followed by an audience of more than 100 participants.

L-Università ta' Malta
Islands & Small States Institute

Webinar: Governance in Small States
Global launching of the book: *Handbook of Governance in Small States*, published by Routledge, UK

Stefano Moncada Chairperson

Panel of speakers and themes:

Lino Briguglio	Introduction
Travis Mitchel	Political governance
Jessica Byron	Social governance
Sainivalati S. Navoti	Environmental governance
Cyrus Rustomjee	Economic governance
Wouter Veenendaal	Concluding remarks

04 March 2021
EST: 10am
CET: 4pm
ACT: 11pm

The panel will be followed by a discussion and an open Q&A session.

Zoom Registration link:
http://bit.do/Governance-in-Small-States_UM-ISSI

islands@um.edu.mt @UMIslands @um.islands

Handbook of Governance in Small States
Edited by Lino Briguglio, Jessica Byron, Stefano Moncada and Wouter Veenendaal

Picture 15. Poster of Webinar organized by the ISSI to present the book *Handbook of Governance in Small States*

In collaboration with the Archipelagic & Island States (AIS) Forum of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), on 12th April 2021, the ISSI co-hosted the webinar entitled “Innovative Responses to Climate Change in Islands and Small States”. The event formed part of the Scholar Spaces Series, which aims to strengthen relationships between AIS participating countries and form linkages in the growing AIS University Network as well as enhance students’ ability to understand the core issues affecting climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The webinar was moderated by Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino, Chairperson of the ISSI and Ambassador of the Republic of Malta for Islands and Small States. ISSI’s Director Dr Stefano Moncada, Dr Aideen Foley, Senior Lecturer at Birkbeck University of London (UK), and Prof. Patrick Nunn, Professor for Geography at the University of the Sunshine Coast (Australia), were speakers.

The AIS Forum and the Islands and Small States Institute (ISSI) at the University of Malta (UM) present

The Scholars Space: Innovative Responses to Climate Change in Islands and Small States

SPEAKERS:

MODERATOR:



Dr Stefano Moncada
Islands and Small States Institute,
University of Malta
(Malta)



Dr Aideen Foley
Department of Geography, Birkbeck
University of London
(UK)



Prof. Patrick Nunn
University of the Sunshine Coast
(Australia)



Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino
Ambassador of the Republic of Malta for
Islands and Small States

Monday, 12 April 2021
09:00 – 10:30 AM CEST /
14:00 – 15:30 PM Jakarta Time

REGISTER NOW!
www.bit.ly/SSwithMalta

Picture 16. Poster of Webinar organised by the ISSI and the Archipelagic and Islands Forum (AIS)

5.2. Articles (newspapers, Newspoint)

During the academic year 2020/2021, the ISSI was featured in a number of news items and outlets, ranging from the University's own Newspoint information portal to national and international publications and Government press releases.

Whilst a comprehensive list of article links is found below, here are some highlights:

Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and the Islands and Small States Institute of the University of Malta

In its press release, the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA) informs about the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Ministry and the Islands and Small States Institute, affirming the institutions' shared commitment to promote the interests of

small states at the local and international level, and to strengthening Malta's central role in this regard. MFEA acknowledges that the ISSI "[...] has played an important role in this area, with its various publications and academic courses contributing to the formulation of policies for economic and social development as well as small-state studies."

The press release continues by outlining the collaborative agreement, which includes "[...] the provision of a consultancy services, the funding of scholarships for students hailing from small states and seeking to further their studies at the Islands and Small States Institute, promoting the work of the institute in international diplomatic fora, and lobbying international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to assist small countries in their fight against organised crime, money laundering and financial fraud."

Press release by the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs (Ref: PR201725en) (14th September 2020).

Ref.: <https://www.gov.mt/en/Government/DOI/Press%20Releases/Pages/2020/September/14/pr201725en.aspx>

University of Malta academic part of Mediterranean Experts on Climate & Environmental Change awarded prize from Council of Europe

The Newspoint article announces that Dr Stefano Moncada has been awarded the prestigious 2020 North-South Council of Europe (CoE) prize, as part of the network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC). Dr Moncada had contributed as Coordinating Lead Author (CLA) to the chapter on development and economic impacts, as well as to the summary for policymakers, which formed part of the first MedECC assessment report (MAR1).

Through the award, the CoE recognised that MedECC "[...]constitutes both, a leading example of the potential of collaboration between states and societies to face the challenges of climate change and environmental sustainability, as well as response to the need of scientific and expert cooperation to produce knowledge-based analysis as a sound basis for policy planning. The network also constitutes a concrete example of the vision of the Mediterranean Sea as a shared space of peace, development and human rights, which led to the creation, twenty-five years ago, of the Barcelona Process."

Newspoint (17th December 2020)

Ref.: <https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2020/12/climate-change-prize-moncada>

Three 'thematic' ambassadors appointed

The Times of Malta article reports the appointment of Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino, then Chairperson of the Board of the ISSI, as Malta's Ambassador-at-Large for Islands and Small States. "Baldacchino will focus on strengthening Malta's role on islands and small states. He will lead efforts to promote the interests of small states in the international arena. He will work closely with the University's Institute of Islands and Small States, as well as with the

Malta-based Small States Centre of Excellence to promote, among other things, scholarship opportunities in this field. He will also advise the government on how to promote the interests of small states, with an increase in Malta’s allocation from the Overseas Development Fund to these states.”

Times of Malta (4th February 2021)

Ref.: <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/three-thematic-ambassadors-appointed.849440>

Prof. Lino Briguglio addresses UN meeting

This Times of Malta article reports that Prof. Lino Briguglio, former Director and current Board member of the ISSI, had on 9th April 2021 addressed a technical United Nations meeting on the Vulnerability Index for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which he had developed in the early 1990s. “Prof. Briguglio has published several studies on small island states and some of his publications are used as suggested readings on economic vulnerability and resilience in various universities worldwide.”

Times of Malta (18th April 2021)

Ref.: <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/prof-lino-briguglio-addresses-un-meeting.865449>

Table 4. List of articles featuring the ISSI

Date	Media	Title	Weblink
27 July 2020	Newspoint	Academic from the Islands and Small States Institute appointed Virtual Island Summit 2020 Ambassador	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2020/07/vis2020
9 August 2020	Times of Malta	Malta to host Virtual Island Summit	https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/malta-to-host-virtual-island-summit.810393
19 August 2020	Newspoint	Webinar on Small States & COVID-19	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2020/09/small-states-covid
14 September 2020	Times of Malta	Plans for Malta centre to fight money laundering in small states (Ivan Martin)	https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/plans-for-malta-centre-to-fight-money-laundering-in-small-states.818041

14 September 2020	Government of Malta	Press release by the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs (Ref: PR201725en): Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and the Islands and Small States Institute of the University of Malta	https://www.gov.mt/en/Government/DOI/Press%20Releases/Pages/2020/September/14/pr201725en.aspx
Date	Media	Title	Weblink
18 September 2020	Newspoint	ISSI partners with MFEA to support Islands and Small States	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2020/09/ISSI-agreement-foreign-ministry
7 October 2020	Newspoint	1st edition of Handbook of Governance in Small States (Routledge)	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2020/10/handbook-gov-small-states
28 October 2020	Newspoint	Exploring democracy & decentralisation in small states	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2020/10/democracy-decentralisation-book
29 October 2020	WHO	Small countries and COVID-19: how can they improve resilience and strengthen capacity?	https://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/malta/news/news/2020/10/small-countries-and-covid-19-how-can-they-improve-resilience-and-strengthen-capacity
2 November 2020	Newspoint	Call for Abstracts: Islands of the World Conference	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/notices/opportunities/2020/11/islands-world-conference-2021
18 November 2020	Newspoint	UM Academic Coordinating Lead Author in the First Mediterranean Assessment Report	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2020/11/coordinating-lead-author-med

17 December 2020	Newspoint	UM academic part of Mediterranean Experts on Climate & Environmental Change awarded prize from Council of Europe	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2020/12/climate-change-prize-moncada
4 February 2021	Times of Malta	Three 'thematic' ambassadors appointed	https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/three-thematic-ambassadors-appointed.849440
Date	Media	Title	Weblink
4 February 2021	Government of Malta	Press release by the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs (Ref: PR210250): Three new thematic Ambassadors for Malta	https://foreignandeu.gov.mt/en/Government/Press%20Releases/Pages/Three-new-thematic-Ambassadors-for-Malta.aspx
15 February 2021	Newspoint	Webinar: Governance in Small States	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/events/um/2021/03/webinargovernanceinsmallstates
1 April 2021	UNDP AIS Forum	The Scholars Space: Innovative Response to Climate Change in Island and Small States	https://www.aisforum.org/opportunity/the-scholars-space-innovative-response-to-climate-change-in-island-and-small-states
9 April 2021	Newspoint	Prof. Briguglio invited to address online UN meeting	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2021/04/eu-un-meeting
18 April 2021	Times of Malta	Prof. Lino Briguglio addresses UN meeting	https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/prof-lino-briguglio-addresses-un-meeting.865449

19 April 2021	Newspoint	Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship opportunity	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/notices/opportunities/2021/04/marie-curie-small-states
21 May 2021	Newspoint	Scholarships for SIDS students engaged in postgraduate studies	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/notices/opportunities/2021/05/scholarships-sids-postgraduate
3 June 2021	Island Innovation	Post-Graduate Scholarships for SIDS Students at The University of Malta	https://www.islandinnovation.co/post-graduate-scholarships-university-of-malta/
Date	Media	Title	Weblink
9 June 2021	Newspoint	Call for Abstracts: Special Issue of GeoForum journal (Elsevier), June 2021	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/notices/opportunities/2021/06/call-abstracts-geoforum
5 July 2021	Newspoint	Has COVID-19 brought about the demise of island tourism?	https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2021/07/tourism-paper-issi

5.3. Social media activities

The Institute embarked on a social media campaign to make its academic activities and outputs known to a wider audience. Thursdays were allocated to the *Small States and Territories* Journal with each post giving space to one article after the other, starting from the very first issue of May 2018. Tuesdays were allocated to chapters from the *Routledge Handbook on Governance in Small States*.

It is now foreseen that space will be given to other publications from the ISSI's portfolio, such as the Handbook on Small States and the SIDS Vulnerability and Resilience under Climate Change.

ISSI also promoted its postgraduate programmes at relevant points during the year in order to attract more researchers hailing from SIDS and those who have an acute interest in island and small state studies.

6. COLLABORATIONS

The ISSI actively promotes collaboration with public and private entities to increase visibility and reach of its teaching and research activities, as well as the mainstream of islands and small states studies.

6.1. Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

In September 2020, the University of Malta, spearheaded by the ISSI, signed a Declaration of Principles (DoP) with the Maltese Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA). Inter alia, the DoP foresees the following collaborative efforts: promotion of the work of the ISSI, including its research output and programmes of study, through the MFEA's diplomatic representations overseas; setting up of a global centre in Malta for the study and technical assistance aimed at strengthening regulatory structures against money laundering and financial fraud in small island state jurisdictions; the organisation of annual training and workshop opportunities for government officials and international audiences, on policy and other matters relevant for islands and small states; collaboration in championing the interests of small states and SIDS, in particular; cooperation between the ISSI and the Commonwealth Small States Centre of Excellence; and the funding of scholarships through the MFEA for students originating from SIDS and enrolling with the ISSI for M.A. and Ph.D. programmes.

Concerning the latter, during the first half of 2021, the ISSI and the MFEA signed an agreement for the funding of a total of six M.A. and one Ph.D. scholarship. These are being offered to students originating from Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the course of three academic years, starting in 2021.

6.2. IRENA

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) is an intergovernmental organisation which aims to support countries in their transition to a sustainable energy future. In the fourth quarter of 2020, the ISSI started negotiations with IRENA, based in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates), to develop a collaborative partnership. These efforts were supported by the Maltese Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA), which at the same time was also negotiating closer collaboration with IRENA. In May 2021, the ISSI's Director Dr Moncada submitted the expression of interest to IRENA's Director General La Camera for the Institute to become a partner of the Agency's Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Lighthouses Initiative.

6.3. Archipelagic and Island States (AIS) Forum

In March 2021, the ISSI was contacted by representatives of the Archipelagic and Island States (AIS) Forum of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with a request for collaboration to co-host a webinar. In fact, on 12th April 2021, the ISSI and AIS co-hosted the webinar entitled "Innovative Responses to Climate Change in Islands and Small States".

It is foreseen that, in the final quarter of 2021, the ISSI and AIS will be developing a Declaration of Principles or Memorandum of Understanding, to agree on broader terms of collaboration in the future.

6.4. University of Seychelles

In mid-2020, the University of Malta, spearheaded by the ISSI, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Seychelles (UniSey). The partners agreed to transfer knowledge and expertise between academic staff; offer exchanges to students for enhanced learning and research experience; explore joint research and study programme development; and to share relevant information.

In the course of 2021, ISSI and UniSey representatives, including Director Dr Moncada and UniSey's Vice-Chancellor Dr Joelle Perreau, agreed to intensify the cooperation between the institutions by developing a scholarship programme for UniSey staff and students to study at the ISSI at Master's and Ph.D. levels. This followed positive experiences in the past of UniSey representatives who read for their Ph.D. at the ISSI. It is foreseen that the scholarship agreement will be signed by the end of 2021.

6.5. 3CL

The ISSI has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Commonwealth Centre For Connected Learning (3CL), a foundation registered in Malta by the Ministry for Education and Employment, with the objective to collaborate, enhance cooperation, exchange of information and the provision of support in various forms in order to achieve success by taking full advantage of the diplomatic, political, economic and social opportunities presented by an enhanced understanding of islands and small states, and especially the Small Island Developing States recognised by the United Nations. ISSI and 3CL intend to work especially on (a) inclusive and complementary approaches to education, research and training; (b) development and sharing of open learning and distance educational; (c) sharing of knowledge from theory and applied work in education, research and training in the context of islands and small states; and (d) explore opportunities for joint collaboration in EU and other externally funded projects in the education, research and training sectors.