



REsilienT water gOvernance Under climate Change within the WEFE NEXUS: MALTA case study



RETOUCH NEXUS

Energy and Water Agency (EWA)



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THE RETOUCH NEXUS PROJECT



CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

THE CASE STUDY IN A NUTSHELL

This case study seeks to assess and bolster the governance mechanisms currently in place to improve their resilience in the face of anticipated challenges. These include changes which may potentially result from climate change and population growth together with those arising from Malta's energy dependence for water production and treatment, which also needs to be reconciled with the country's ever-increasing energy-related commitments and obligations. This should result in a more holistic governance framework which considers the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem nexus based on legislation and public engagement. It also anticipates the proposal of economic tools which effectively promote resource and environmental sustainability rather than a simple recovery of financial costs.

EWA is an agency of the government of Malta and is tasked with formulating both energy policy and sustainable water management policy for the country.

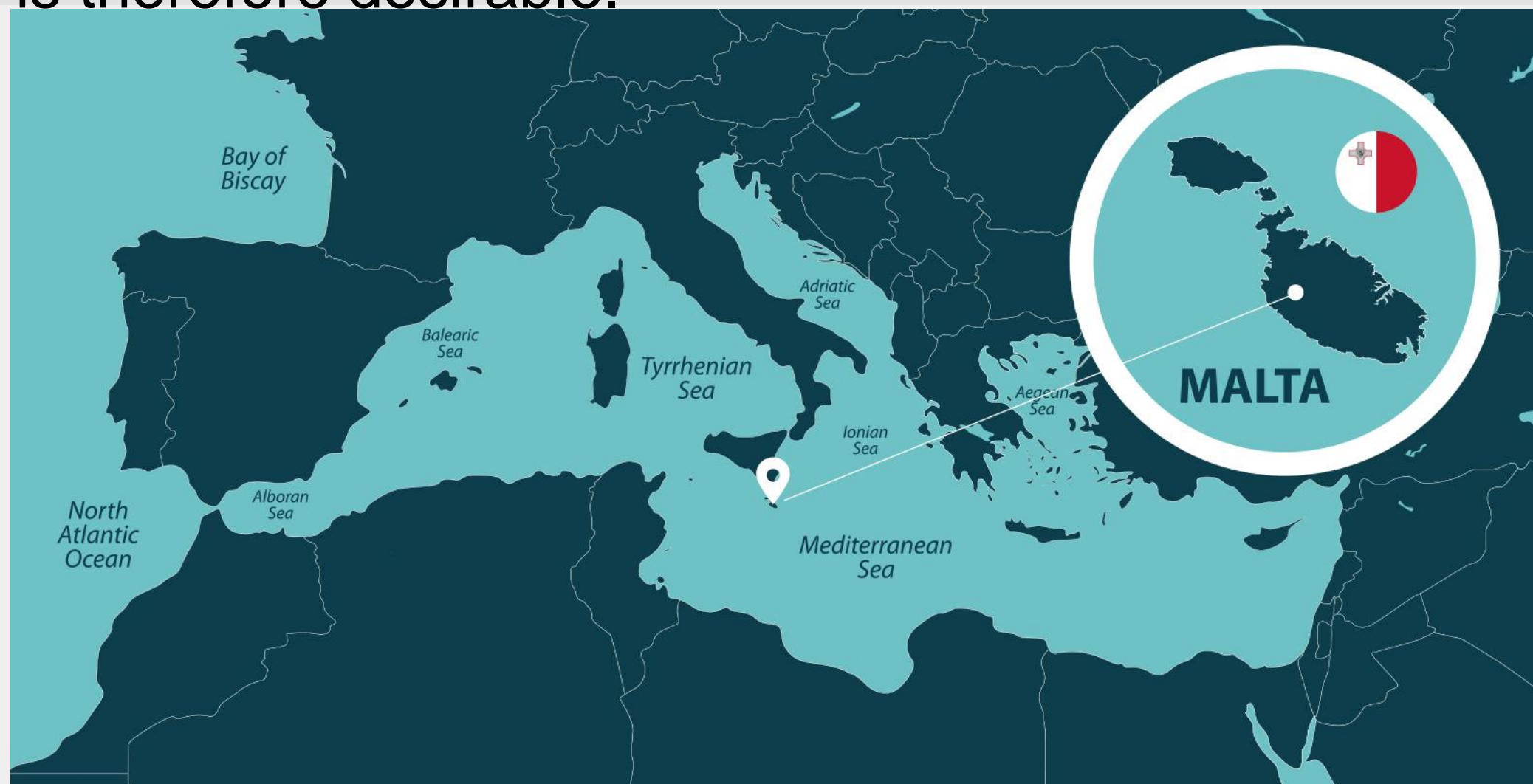
CONTEXT OF THE CASE STUDY

All the islands in the Maltese archipelago are classified as a single river basin. The high population density (>1670km⁻²) and the islands' semi-arid climate result in Malta having the lowest freshwater availability per capita in the EU.

Malta is increasingly dependent on non-conventional water sources to meet its water demand, including that of its agricultural sector. The processes involved are energy-intensive and Malta's local production of renewable energy is limited to PV technology, the deployment of which is, in turn limited by space considerations and cost of land.

It is anticipated that climate-change effects such as an increased variability of precipitation and increased temperatures, will result in the lower availability of natural freshwater resources as well as an increase in water demand – thereby increasing the potential of prolonged droughts and associated water scarcity. The situation will be further exacerbated by an increasing flood risk resulting from the occurrence of extreme precipitation events.

A governance program aimed at attenuating the potential impacts of these issues is therefore desirable.



CONTRIBUTION

The RETOUCH Nexus methodology, the water governance indicators and recommendations will be applied to one single territory. However, whilst relatively limited in its geographical scope and numbers at a stakeholder and at a policy-maker level, it effectively comprises an entire EU Member State.

The case study shall have a nation-wide impact and relevance when it comes to the implementation of the project outcomes and can thus contribute an overview of the potential of the project outcomes at all levels of governance.

METHODOLOGY & EXPECTED RESULTS



The anticipated results are a more resilient and comprehensive WEFE-sensitive governance framework which uses different and adapted tools to effectively address water governance in Malta equitably whilst addressing the needs of different users. Given the size and geo-specific nature of water governance in small islands, whilst the model cannot be upscaled, it can be replicated in other islands, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS) facing similar water management challenges.

LOCAL WATER GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

The Governance system identifies clear institutional roles at the Policy, Regulatory and Implementation levels within a comprehensive water management framework addressing the implementation of the EU Water Acquis. Coordination is ensured through an Inter-Ministerial Committee addressing the implementation process of the Water Framework and daughter Directives.

Effective engagement with stakeholders is ensured through the establishment of a National Water Table which brings together stakeholders from the public and private sector to discuss and follow the implementation of key planning documents such as the RBMP and the FRPM.

LOCAL INDICATORS USED FOR MONITORING WATER GOVERNANCE

Key high level indicators are established to monitor the effectiveness of the national water management framework. These indicators also address the sub-objectives identified under SDG6. These key high level indicators include:

- (i) National Management Plans in place and their level of implementation.
- (ii) Security of Supply (% of population with access to drinking water/sanitation)
- (iii) Economic (Level of Cost Recovery for Municipal Water supply).
- (iv) Social – Level of Stakeholder Engagement (National Water Table meetings).

These high level indicators are complemented by quantitative indicators at the level of each measure included under the RBMP and the FRMP, which are monitored by the IMC of the WFD.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ANALYSIS

In the execution of the Maltese Case Study, EWA plans to engage public participation and stakeholder engagement primarily through the National Water Table, which is a consultative grouping of stakeholders. It includes entities involved in the implementation of Malta's River Basin Management Plan, of which EWA is the lead entity, other public entities, NGOs and voluntary organisations as well as private sector entities (including groups and associations thereof together with individuals). The group meets on an ongoing basis to assess the progress achieved and to provide technical and other input, based on each participant's area of interest or expertise. This is intended to ensure the establishment of a continuous consultation process through which stakeholders can be involved in the development of the approaches and measures required for the achievement of objectives. It is anticipated that this participation may be extended to participation in the assessment and formulation of a holistic water governance system for the Maltese islands.

References:

The Energy and Water Agency. (2022). The 2nd Water Catchment Management Plan for the Malta Water Catchment District 2015 – 2021. Government of Malta.

The Energy and Water Agency. (2019). Preliminary flood risk assessment for the Malta river basin district. Government of Malta.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 101086522.