



3-11 February 2025

# The Human Dimension of Biodiversity A Visual Approach

Workshop NBFC/MaRHE Center – Magoodhoo, Faafu, Maldives





## Introduction

Human activities are rapidly transforming ecosystems, and this is especially evident on small islands. From land reclamation to biodiversity loss, these changes affect not only the environment but also local communities and cultures. Understanding the human dimension of biodiversity involves exploring how ecosystems evolve, how species disappear, and the impact these changes have on the people living in these vulnerable areas and across the globe.

The core of this interdisciplinary International workshop at NBFC/MaRHE Center International offers a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the environmental, social, and cultural dynamics of the Maldives. You will engage in fieldwork within some of the world's most stunning coastal and marine ecosystems. Through this hands-on experience, you will gain insight into critical global issues such as climate change adaptation, community resilience, and sustainable development.

By studying ecosystems like coral reefs and mangroves, you will see firsthand how biodiversity influences both island life and global environmental connections. You will also learn about national conservation policies and discover the key role that iconic species, such as corals, play in preserving biodiversity and cultural heritage.

Whether you are an experienced photographer or just have a smartphone, this workshop will teach you how to use visual storytelling to document and communicate ecosystem changes and human impact. No prior photography skills or professional equipment are required.

The course consists of a series of lectures and field activities, led by expert researchers and professors. The lectures will take place at the Marine Research and High Education Center, and all fieldwork in the sea will be conducted through snorkeling.



## Why Apply?

- Immerse yourself in the stunning marine environments of the Maldives;
- Study the social and cultural aspects of biodiversity loss and conservation;
- Gain practical fieldwork experience, including photography;
- Learn from leading researchers and educators in a global context;
- Develop skills that are essential for addressing climate change, enhancing community resilience, and promoting sustainable development.

## Target

Master and PhD international students



photo by Beatrice Ruggieri



## Preliminary program

### *Theoretical lectures*

- Biodiversity protection regulations in the Maldives (Luca Fallati, Beatrice Ruggieri, Simone Montano/Federica Siena);
- Corals as heritage (Marcella Schmidt di Friedberg);
- Land reclamation and gender dimension (Alice Salimbeni and Beatrice Ruggieri);
- Possible guest lectures.

### *Methodological lectures (Classroom + field activities with drones and cameras)*

- Visual approaches in geography (Alice Salimbeni)
- Use of drones to map biodiversity loss (Luca Fallati)
- Map the Giants (Simone Montano/Federica Siena)

### *Group activities*

- Map the Giants and coral stone traps – Snorkeling, underwater pictures, drones and satellite imagery.
- Biodiversity loss and ecosystem services – Tour of Magoodhoo Island, followed by a creative workshop on visual elements of biodiversity loss.
- Excursions – Snorkeling in different areas around Magoodhoo (Map the Giants, coral stone traps), observing local night fishing, Filitheyo Island Resort and the marine protected area around Filitheyo, Nilandhoo mosque.



photo by Luca Fallati



## Fee

1500 euros per participant.

(It is possible to pay in two installments).

*The fee includes:* Maldives entry visa; Insurance coverage; Boat transfer to/from Malé airport; Transportation for all activities included in the program; Full board accommodation at the MarHE Center in Magoodhoo, with lodging in a shared room; Lessons and activities included in the program; Use of the boat for excursions from Magoodhoo.

*The fee does not include:* Round-trip airfare; Possible COVID-19 test; Any passport renewal expenses; Anything not specified above.

## Deadlines

A detailed program will be published in the second half of September 2024. Applicants must submit their request within the end of November 2024 Workshop 3-11 February 2025.

Once the minimum number of participants has been reached, you will receive the invoice and the PagoPa payment slip via email with instructions on how to pay the workshop fee.

The invoice must be paid within 10 days of receipt.

We will give you the go-ahead to purchase airline tickets after registration.

### Round-trip airfare

The purchase of the flight will be at your own expense. The choice of airline is up to you, the important thing is to be at the airport on the specified date and time (we will provide the details once you are registered). This means that you can arrive before the start date and depart after.





## Passport

To enter the Maldives, you must have a passport valid for more than 6 months from the date of entry.

If you do not have a passport, we encourage you to apply for one promptly, as the waiting times can be long.

At the end of this document, we have attached a letter from the center to submit to the police headquarters (only after registering) to expedite the issuance process.

Additionally, we need to have a copy of your passport by the end of September in order to proceed with the entry visa application, which we will handle entirely.





## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Clothing and Equipment

The air temperature is around 28-29°C (Figure 2). The climate is always pleasant, even during the rainy months.

Please note that a large part of the day will be occupied by field activities, seminars, and exercises, so comfortable and sporty clothing is recommended.

We advise avoiding overly revealing clothing since the island of Magoodhoo is not a tourist resort, and the local customs reflect those of an Islamic country.

For field activities at sea, you will need the following gear in addition to a swimsuit and towel (further details will be provided before departure):

- Mask (no full-face masks);
- Snorkel;
- Fins (with booties);
- Wetsuit or lycra shirt;
- Underwater camera (optional but recommended);
- Watch.

### Accommodation and Meals

During the workshop, you will stay at the Center, in shared rooms with services, with full board (breakfast, lunch, and dinner). Sheets and towels will be provided.

The food is prepared according to local customs, so it will largely consist of fish, chicken, rice, and variously prepared vegetables. If anyone is vegetarian, vegan, or has allergies, please inform us in advance. Single rooms are not available.

### Health

No vaccinations are required for travelers from Italy to the Maldives. However, it is a good practice to check the validity of your tetanus vaccination by verifying the expiration date on your local health authority's health card. If it has expired, it can be renewed in time.



photo by Beatrice Ruggieri



## **Safety**

Any field activity inherently presents risks and dangers, and there are some basic rules to follow in order to minimize these risks.

## **Currency**

The Maldivian currency is the Maldivian rufiyaa. Euros and US dollars are generally accepted but must be new and undamaged.

1 Euro = 17 rufiyaa; 1 Dollar = 15 rufiyaa.

## **Time**

There is a three or four-hour time difference between Italy and the Maldives, depending on daylight savings time.

## **Communication**

A wireless network is available on the island, which can be used with your own laptop for educational purposes.

It may also be possible (depending on logistics) to purchase a local SIM card with data.

## **Insurance Coverage**

Health Insurance: Mandatory Maldivian health insurance is included in the cost of the entry visa (Business Visa) for the Maldives: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bqqMusDfFexSzbSVxfkGLylutN-NeYgl/view>).

## **Liability and Accident Insurance**

The university has the following insurance policies in place for workshop participants, with worldwide territorial validity, which can be found on the university's website at the following link:

(<https://www.unimib.it/servizi/studenti-e-laureati/opportunita-e-facilities/assicurazioni>).

Students must comply with the regulations on prevention and safety provided and must immediately inform the university in the event of an accident during activities related to the program by contacting the Welfare and National Health Service Relations Department by writing to: [assicurazioni@unimib.it](mailto:assicurazioni@unimib.it).



photo by Alice Salimbeni



# Looking forward to meeting you!

Luca Fallati, Simone Montano, Beatrice Ruggieri, Alice Salimbeni,  
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