

Ria de Aveiro: a reference socio-ecological system and a platform for excellence in research

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The Ria de Aveiro, a coastal lagoon in Portugal's Centro region, is renowned for its natural and socioeconomic importance, forming part of the Natura 2000 Network. It features diverse habitats, including sand dunes, seagrasses, saltmarshes, sand and mudflats, and reed beds, supporting high biological diversity. This environment serves as a natural laboratory, providing ecosystem services vital to both the environment and human well-being, and it is a platform for education and training. The lagoon's activities stimulate the regional economy and are part of the cultural identity and lifestyle of local communities.

For more than 10 years, research projects have contributed to the Long-Term Socio-Ecological Research (LT_SER) platform Ria de Aveiro. These transdisciplinary projects involve regional, national, and international participants, reflecting the lagoon's global significance and collaborative efforts to address societal challenges.

These research initiatives aim to develop innovative and transformative solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation and restoration, sustainable resource consumption, and cultural heritage preservation. They bridge the gap between science, policy, and community engagement. Ria de Aveiro also holds historical and cultural significance, supporting traditional activities such as artisanal salt production, fishing, shellfish collecting, bait digging, seagrass and seaweed harvesting, agriculture, waterfowl hunting, the Marinhoa cattle breed, and unique architectural styles. These activities are economically important and culturally embedded in the region. The balance of traditional practices with modern sustainable development exemplifies potential for economic growth alongside environmental stewardship.

The Ria de Aveiro serves as a significant platform for high-quality research on sustainable socio-ecological systems, with several collaborative projects showcasing international collaboration and excellence.

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FIGURE 1

A participatory moment with the interested parts at the LT_SER platform Ria de Aveiro, bridging local and european initiatives.

FIGURE 2

Composition with the logo of the LT_SER platform Ria de Aveiro plus 10 transdisciplinary projects covering the 2011-2030 period as an example of international collaboration and excellence in research.

