

>> SYNTHESIZE MOUNTAINS OF KNOWLEDGE <<

Submitted Abstract

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Abstract

On 28-29th October 2018 Vaia windstorm hit the North-East of Italy affecting four out of the seven administrative regions situated in the Italian Alpine area. Vaia has been the largest single natural event that this area ever experienced, destroying more than 43.000 ha of forests, and causing long-lasting environmental and socio-economic impacts.

The storm has mainly hit mountain territories, exacerbating already existing fragilities. On the one hand it revealed the unpreparedness of local and regional institutions and inadequacy of legal frameworks in dealing with natural disasters, and, on the other, it showed how existing environmental and socio-economic vulnerabilities slowed down post-disaster recovery processes, ultimately affecting the natural resources and the range of ecosystem services they provide.

Our research investigated how existing governance structures at different territorial levels, as well as decision making procedures and legislative frameworks have been adapted and transformed to answer the necessities brought by the storm. Content analysis of policies and legislation has been complemented by surveys to local and regional institutional actors to acquire a better understanding of: i) the main strengths and weaknesses of the involved governance structures; ii) adaptations of existing legal, institutional and technical frameworks to manage windstorm environmental, social and economic impacts; iii) collaborative networks established at different territorial levels and the multi-level governance interactions between institutions;. The “Senday Framwork for DRR” and “build-back-better” approach were taken as benchmarks to analyze the results obtained and assess ability of local and regional institutions to implement effective post disaster recovery management and built more resilient societies.

Preliminary findings revealed that despite just after the windstorm ad hoc measures have been implemented to manage immediate post-event interventions, the absence of a steering committee and of a clear multi-sector, multi-actor and multi-level strategy to manage extreme weather events in mountain regions have led to the implementation of uncoordinated, and thus less effective and less efficient, regional and local recovery measures. The identification of these gaps is intended to provide feedback and insights to improve adaptability and preparedness of institutions to cope with and manage future extreme weather event challenges. This could support the formulation of effective and long-term solutions boosting socio-ecological resilience of mountain communities.