

## **Planning for Climate Neutral Territories: The Role of Blue/Green Infrastructure**

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023,**

**Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute, Iontas Building, Maynooth  
University**

**10.00 – 13.00**

Maynooth University and the Southern Regional Assembly, as ESPON Contact Point (ECP) and Monitoring Committee (MC) members respectively for Ireland, invite you to an in-person seminar on the theme of *Planning for Climate Neutral Territories: The Role of Blue/Green Infrastructure*.

Across the island of Ireland, growing importance is being attached to the development of blue/green networks across regions. Ireland's *National Planning Framework* (2018) speaks to the role of green infrastructure (albeit defined quite narrowly) in informing the preparation of regional and metropolitan strategies and city and county development plans. There is no reference to the role of blue infrastructure – thus highlighting how quickly this agenda has evolved in the five years since the publication of the *National Planning Framework*. At regional and local government level, there is a growing emphasis being placed on the need to plan more strategically for blue/green infrastructure to not only create a climate resilient and adaptable society but also to support the transition to sustainable energies. To this end, a number of the regional assemblies and local councils are developing blue/green infrastructure plans to advance tailored approaches to place-making, climate adaptation, improved air and water quality, and enhancing/conserving healthy ecosystems.

As research undertaken by ESPON shows, the main benefits provided by green infrastructure span the economy, environment and society at large, with policy objectives relating to biodiversity, climate change and disaster risk reduction, job creation, health and well-being and water management. In Ireland, however, the ESPON research (GRETA) concluded that implementation of green infrastructure is limited to delivery of land-use and water policies such as SUDs and needs to be broadened out to other national policy sectors such as climate change and modal shift to facilitate bringing about more green infrastructure investment. This is also the case for blue infrastructure roll-out.

The purpose of this half-day seminar is to consider what approaches have been adopted to date in both planning and implementing blue/green infrastructure and the key drivers behind this investment. Drawing on previous ESPON research, regional initiatives and other EU-funded programmes, this in-person seminar will consider the role of blue/green infrastructure in delivering on smart, sustainable and territorial inclusive development and planning for climate neutrality. This half-day event builds on previous SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Fora events held by the three Regional Assemblies since 2020 to build capacity within local authorities on strategic priorities and showcase the most up to date research and outputs of the various departments.

Sponsored by the ESPON 2030 programme, this in-person seminar will take place in Maynooth University on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 from 10.00 to 13.00. Participation is open to all interested parties, and attendance is free of charge. However, places are limited and we encourage you to register early.

ESPON is an EU-funded programme that bridges research with policy; providing spatial analysis, data and maps to

- Underpin EU development policies, in particular Cohesion Policy, with facts and evidence, and
- Support authorities and decision-makers in benchmarking their region or city, in identifying new challenges and potential, and in shaping successful development policies for the future.

The focus of ESPON's work over this programming period will be informed by up to ten Thematic Action Plans (TAPs). This event is being organised under the framework of the Thematic Action Plan (TAP) "Climate Neutral Territories".

**Registration:**

To register, click [here](#)



**Programme:**

Time	Contribution
10.00-10.10	<b>Welcome to Event</b> Mr. David Kelly & Mr. Kevin Lynch, Monitoring Committee (MC) Member for Ireland, ESPON 2030 and Southern Regional Assembly
10.10-10.50 (10 mins each)	<b>Getting to Climate Neutrality – Proposals from Irish Cities across the Regions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cork</b> – Cork City Council (speaker to be confirmed)</li> <li>• <b>Dublin</b> – Mr. Pdraig Doyle, Senior Engineer, Drainage Planning, Policy and Development Control, Dublin City Council</li> <li>• <b>Galway</b> – Ms. Sharon Carroll, Executive Scientist and Project manager, Galway New Zero City Project, Galway City Council</li> </ul>
10.50 – 11.10	<b>Insights from ESPON’s 2020 Research – GRETA: GRen infrastructure: Enhancing biodiversity and ecosysTem services for territoriAl development</b> Mr. Efrén Feliu, Lead of Adaptation to Climate Change, Tecnalía / Lead Contractor, ESPON GRETA Project
11.10 – 11.30	<b>Blue and Green Infrastructure for Sustainable Cities – A Framework for the Southern Regional Assembly</b> Ms. Emma Oldroyd, Senior Lecturer in Landscape Architecture, Leeds Beckett University and formerly ARUP & Ms. Sadhbh Sheeran, Assistant Consultant - Carbon and Climate Change, ARUP
11.30 – 11.45	<b>Q&amp;A</b> Moderated by Mr. Dominic Walsh, Regional Planning Officer, Southern Regional Assembly
11.45 – 12.00	<b>Refreshments / Networking</b>
12.00 – 12.30	<b>Panel Discussion: Planning for Blue/Green Infrastructure in Climate Neutrality</b> Moderator: Mr. Dominic Walsh, Regional Planning Officer, Southern Regional Assembly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Sadhbh Sheeran, Assistant Consultant - Carbon and Climate Change, ARUP</li> <li>• Ms. Nuala O’Connell, Senior Planner, Limerick City and County Council</li> <li>• With other national contributors to be confirmed</li> </ul>
12.30 – 12.50	<b>Q&amp;A</b>
12.50 – 13.00	<b>Closing Remarks and Wrap-Up</b> Ms. Caroline Creamer, ESPON Contact Point (ECP) – Ireland & Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute
13.00	<b>Conference End / Light Lunch</b>

