



Annual Review 2015

ESAI Chairpersons Address from Dr Tom Curran



2015 was a very successful year for the Environmental Sciences Association of Ireland (ESAI) both in terms of events, activities and planning for the future. The highlights are as follows:

- Environ 2015 - 25th Irish Environmental Researchers Colloquium hosted by Institute of Technology Sligo (April 8-10, 2015)
- "Peatlands - A New Conversation" with the Irish Peat Society, Tullamore, June 7-11, 2015
- "Food Processing Waste: Maximising Hidden Resources for Sustainable Food Processing" with UCD Institute of Food and Health, Dublin, June 8, 2015
- "Innovation in Water & Wastewater Technology" with CIWEM, Cork, November 27, 2015
- ESAI Postgraduate Researcher of the Year Award
- ESAI Grassroots Workshop Support Scheme
- ESAI College Liaison Network
- Free ESAI membership offer for undergraduates

We had a record attendance at Environ 2015 at Institute of Technology Sligo and this is reported separately. We thank Dr Frances Lucy (Director of CERIS) and the IT Sligo committee for hosting ENVIRON and for assembling a very comprehensive programme. ESAI provided administrative support and registration facilities for "Peatlands - A New Conversation" with the Irish Peat Society and this was deemed a great success. Thanks to Sinead Macken for the smooth running of this collaboration.

We were also involved with organising "Food Processing Waste: Maximising Hidden Resources for Sustainable Food Processing" with UCD Institute of Food and Health and "Innovation in Water & Wastewater Technology" with CIWEM. Both events were well attended. A report on the food waste event is due to be published shortly and the water/wastewater technology seminar will be highlighted in our ESAI ezine in due course.

Thanks to Dr Martina Prendergast for co-ordinating the "ESAI Postgraduate Researcher of the Year Award" and "ESAI Grassroots Workshop Support Scheme" and to all the Council members who assisted in the assessments. The applications for researcher of the year were evaluated according to the criteria: Scientific excellence

and originality; Impact (economic/environmental/societal) and; Dissemination (conferences, outreach and media). Congratulations to the 2015 ESAI Postgraduate Researcher of the Year, Luke Prendergast from UCD. The workshops supported in 2015 were "Citizen Science and GIS Training School" in NUIG, August 20 – 23 and "Green Shoots vs Green Transport Workshop", August 27, NUIG. Details of both schemes can be found on the back cover of this book.

One of our major initiatives for this past year was to reach out to colleges more than we have done in the past. As part of this, we welcomed on board an ESAI Liaison in each college. These staff members act as a contact point for ESAI activities and information flow. We have also offered free membership to all undergraduates in relevant courses in each college and we were delighted with the initial response from students across several institutions. The list of third level environmental education programmes on our web site is being updated as part of this process. We hope that this approach will facilitate more engagement with students and in particular will raise awareness and stimulate interest in environmental research. We have been encouraged by the growing number of non-research based students (e.g. taught Masters) attending Environ over the past few years and we would anticipate that this trend may extend further to undergraduate students through this process.

A key ESAI meeting was held in March 2015 to decide on future strategy. We would like to be the association of choice for environmental researchers on the island of Ireland. We would also aim to provide the best networking opportunities for environmental science research.

While the YouTube and Photography Competitions attracted entries in the past, the ESAI decided not to run these activities in 2015 in order to focus on other initiatives, which may be of more significant benefit to members. A decision was also made to remove the Directory of Expertise from the ESAI web site as it was not being used to any significant extent. In addition, the EPA has a more comprehensive catalogue of experts at <http://erc.epa.ie/h2020catalogue/>.

On the communication front, we launched a new format for the ezine which we believe is more interactive and effective. I would like to thank Elizabeth O'Reilly for co-ordinating the launch of the new format and editing the initial two issues. As always, we welcome your input. Remember to keep in touch with ESAI through social media on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Thanks to Mark Nolan, our Communications Officer for maintaining our news flow through these channels.

At ESAI Council level, we are seeking new members as always but particularly representatives of our core members to come forward, i.e. early stage researchers. Please attend the ESAI AGM on Wednesday March 23rd if you wish to become involved.

As I sign off as outgoing Chair of the Environmental Sciences Association of Ireland, I would like to acknowledge the excellent contribution of all members of the Council who continue to work to make the ESAI an organisation of which we can be proud. I would particularly like to acknowledge the ESAI administrator, Sinead Macken, for her excellent work, dedication and support during my term as Chairman over the past two years.

Best wishes to all for the year ahead.

Dr Tom Curran is a lecturer in UCD School of Biosystems and Food Engineering and has been on ESAI Council since 2008, served as vice-chair in 2013 and was conference convenor at the 2012 ENVIRON in University College Dublin. He has served as Chair of ESAI from 2014 to 2016.

ESAI Goals and Objectives 2015

The ESAI (Environmental Science Association of Ireland), founded in 1995, as a not for profit organisation.

The membership is drawn from all sectors and disciplines, ranging from biology and ecology to engineering, hydrology and management and from professors to amateur naturalists. The goals and objectives of the organisation are to:

- Provide a forum to facilitate exchange of specialist information and advice amongst environmental researchers, policy makers, environmental management practitioners and other stakeholders, within Ireland and elsewhere.
- Promote a fuller awareness of the role that higher-level education institutions may make in finding solutions for the urgent environmental problems confronting contemporary society.
- Provide a forum for networking amongst environmental researchers both at national and international scales.
- Facilitate an annual conference aimed at providing postgraduate and other researchers with an opportunity to learn about each other's work, and for postgraduates to present and publish papers within a supportive community.
- Promote high professional standards amongst environmental researchers and professionals.
- To ensure a platform for science-based research on the environment in Ireland.
- Provide a Code of Ethics for Environmental Professionals in Ireland through its membership.
- To maintain growth in the membership base.

Membership

Make the most of your Membership

Benefits of Membership

By becoming a member of ESAI, you will also have access to:

- Discounted rates at Environ, the annual Irish Environmental Researchers Colloquium, one of the major activities of the Association. It is now one of the largest national scientific meetings in Ireland attracting over 300 delegates each year.
- Discounted rates for selected workshops, seminars, further education courses and conferences.
- Access to ESAI listserver
- Eligibility to apply for ESAI Postgraduate Researcher of the Year Award
- Eligibility to apply for ESAI Grassroots Workshop Funding
- Learn from others and absorb best practice
- Raise the profile of you and your business
- Stimulate new business opportunities
- Innovate and commercialise new products and services

Raise your Profile

- Members of ESAI will receive free-of-charge E-Newsletters, Environews.
- Sponsorship opportunities

Keeping you informed

The ESAI website (www.esaiweb.org) is kept up to date with the latest news from the association about our upcoming events, competitions and funding opportunities.

We circulate a quarterly newsletter summarising our work throughout the year. We also coordinate an email Listserv, which facilitates a community of over 2,300 subscribers to exchange information about environmental events and career opportunities in Ireland. To sign up to these services, please visit our website.

We are also very active on a number of social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.



http://www.twitter.com/esai_environ



<http://www.facebook.com/esaiweb>



<http://www.linkedin.com/in/esaiweb>

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2015 Events

Date	Event
Jan 31 st	Photocompetition Winner of the ESAI 2014 Photo competition is announced
April 8 th -10 th	Annual Conference Environ 2015 co-hosted by IT Sligo 25th Annual Irish Environmental Researchers Colloquium, IT Sligo, Sligo
April 8 th	Workshop 14:00-17:00 Introduction to how to use R in Environmental Statistics, IT Sligo
April 8 th	Workshop 14:00-17:00 Communicating Research, IT Sligo
April 8 th	Launch ESAI Postgraduate Researcher of the Year Award Launch
April 8 th	Launch ESAI Grassroots Workshop Support Scheme Launch
April 9 th - 10 th	ESAI CV Clinics at Environ IT Sligo
April 9 th	ESAI AGM, 1.30-2pm IT Sligo, Sligo
April 10 th	ESAI Student Competition Prize Giving Ceremony
June 7 th - 11 th	Conference Peatlands - A New Conversation, hosted by Irish Peat Society, cosponsored by ESAI, Tullamore, Offaly
June 8 th	Workshop Food Processing and Waste: Maximising hidden Resources for Sustainable Food Processing, co-hosts with UCD Institute of Food and Health, UCD, Belfield, Dublin 4
August 31 st	ESAI Postgraduate Researcher of the Year Competition Winner Announced
August 31 st	ESAI Grassroots Workshop Support Scheme Call Closes
July	ESAI Environews Summer Edition available online www.esaiweb.org
October 30 th	ESAI Grassroots Workshop Support Scheme Call Closes
November 27 th	Workshop Innovation in Water and Wastewater Technology, co-hosts with CIWEM, Maryborough House Hotel, Cork
November	ESAI Environews Winter Edition available online www.esaiweb.org
December 31 st	ESAI Grassroots Workshop Support Scheme Call Closes

Environ 2015

The 25th Irish Environmental Researchers Colloquium (Environ 2015) was held at IT Sligo from April 8th to 10th and was co-hosted by the School of Science and the Environmental Sciences Association of Ireland (ESAI) (environ2015.org).

The ENVIRON colloquium is the largest annual gathering of environmental researchers in Ireland with over 280 researchers attending this year. The event continues to provide a wonderful platform for postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers to present their research to a wide audience. Since its establishment, one of the main strengths of the colloquium has been that it attracts delegates from a wide variety of disciplines providing a unique opportunity for specialist researchers to learn what is happening outside their own research area.

In today's research world there is an increasing emphasis to tackle societal challenges and impacts, in other words to look beyond our laboratory and field work, and by engaging with stakeholders, find sustainable solutions to real life issues. This was reflected in the theme of this 25th colloquium, 'Environ 25: Sustainability and Opportunities for Change'. The colloquium theme addressed the need to review environmental change since 1991.

The conference began on Wednesday April 8th with two workshops on: 'Introduction of the use of R in Environmental Statistics' (Dr Cólín Minto, GMIT) and 'Communications in Science' (Dr Cara Augustenborg, Impact Research Management and David Dodd, DECLG). These workshops were attended to full capacity and the feedback was very positive from those that engaged in both the statistics and the communications training.



Environ 2015 opened on the evening of Wednesday April 8th with a question and answers style panel debate, open to the public, on the popular topic of **'Paying for our water: quality and quantity matter'**. The panel comprised of Jerry Grant (Head of Asset Management, Irish Water), Fiona Regan (Director of DCU Water Institute), and Michael Fitzmaurice (Independent TD for Roscommon-South Leitrim). The lecture hall was full to capacity, with over 100 in attendance. The debate was ably chaired by Austin O Callaghan,

Communications Manager at IT Sligo and each speaker had five minutes to present their views on the topic. This led to questions from various members of the public to the panel about the water charges issue. The debate was very lively with informed and individual replies from each of the panel members.



The colloquium was formally opened on Thursday morning by Professor Vincent Cunnane, President of IT Sligo followed by four keynote speakers: Dr Richard Thorn (President Emeritus IT Sligo), Dr Micheál Ó Cinnéide (EPA Director), Marianne Kettunen (Senior Policy Analyst, Institute for European Environmental Policy) and Dr Brian Motherway (CEO, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland). Each speaker had a theme specific to their own expertise in the arena of sustainability.

Four concurrent sessions followed the plenary session for the rest of Thursday and for Friday morning. These sessions spanned 15 environmental topic areas, with a total of 110 oral presentations. For the first time in the Environ series, there were sessions on Invasive Species, Nanotechnology, Environmental Socioeconomics, and Sustainable Agriculture – these are cross-disciplinary research areas which were largely unknown or unexplored in the early years of Environ. There were also 85 posters on display, covering the spectrum of sessions, which were viewed during each the coffee breaks and the lunch-breaks. In reviewing the abstracts for oral and poster sessions, we were amazed by the diversity of the research within all the sessions, which is a testament to the researchers, their supervisors and to the vision of the funding organisations.

The poster sessions were held in the lower section of the new IT Sligo Food Court, and this space also held a wide range of exhibitors from environmental agencies, organisations and suppliers. During the breaks delegates had the opportunity to visit these sponsors, who are an integral and valued part of Environ colloquium.

On the Thursday night, the social event was held in the Clarion Hotel. The event was kicked off by the IT Sligo traditional music society, providing a lively ambience to the wine reception. Over 100 delegates came to the event, enjoying a buffet meal and socialising with fellow students and researchers. For mature delegates, there was the chance to catch up with old friends from all parts of Ireland. Postgraduates meeting for the first time at Environ 2015 are likely to cross paths many times during the course of their careers.

The Winner of the Best Oral Presentation at Environ 2015 was Alwynee McGeever, TCD student, for her presentations entitled 'Scots Pine: A native Irish Tree?' Kate Moore was the winner of Best Poster Presentation at Environ 2015 for her work entitled 'Deer exclusion Rhododendron cleared sites promote the recovery of plant communities and invertebrates in the oak woodlands of Killarney National Park.' The joint prize sponsors for both these presentations were the School of Natural Sciences TCD, EPA, and the Family of Maximilian Von Sternburg. There five other prizes including the Biodiversity prize won by Pamela O'Boyle, IT Sligo for her presentation on 'Typology of High Nature Value farmland in a Northern Atlantic pastoral landscape' sponsored by the Institutes of Technology, Ireland (IOTI).

Throughout ENVIRON2015, there was a great opportunity for the 320 delegates to network with fellow researchers, and with industry, agencies and policy makers. We hope this continues to inspire them to think 'outside the box', to explore global research trends and technologies in search of a cross disciplinary vision.

I would like to acknowledge the ESAI Council and especially Sinead Macken for her expertise in organising and managing Environ 2015. Many thanks to all involved at IT Sligo, including the postgraduates, organising committee, IT Services, building office and administration. Thanks to those, independent of IT Sligo and the ESAI, who volunteered to present keynote addresses and chair sessions especially our generous sponsors. We are extremely grateful for the continued sponsorship of Environ by all sponsors, but especially by the EPA whose support is invaluable.

Dr. Frances Lucy

Convener Environ 2015,

Director CERIS research centre, IT Sligo

DRAFT ESAI INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ended 31 December 2015		
Opening balance as at January 1st 2014*		4612.26
Income		
Membership	2668.85	
Environ 2015 - Delegate Fee	26477.59	
- Sponsorship	16640	
Environ 2015 Prizes	2056	
Environ 2016 Delegate Fee	100	
IPS Workshop	32320.53	
Grassroots Workshop Funding	3000	
Bank charge Refund	3000	
Total Income	83991.61	
Expenditure		
Environ 2015 (inc prizes)	31359.06	
Environ 2016	474.18	
Environ 2015 Refunds	375	
IPS Workshop	33670.25	
Workshop Administration	345	

Website	2577.09	
Administration	9576.05	
Travel	349.88	
Postage/Stationary	815.69	
Bank Charges (inc. Merchant banking)	1757.87	
Ezine	280	
Insurance	907.5	
Photography Competition	321.01	
Total Expenditure	82808.58	
Excess Income over Expenditure		1183.03
Closing Balance as at 31st December 2015		5795.29
Balance per Bank @ 31/12/15		6175.8
* The balance includes the Biodiversity Workshop 2000 surplus of €1982.56		

ESAI Council Members 2015

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