

# EU WORKSHOP MAKES PROGRESS ON MAPPING ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY

Ireland's Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly, Southern Regional Assembly and UCD's School of Geography shared best practice for improved landscape governance for sustainability with European colleagues at a recent international training workshop, in Florence, Italy.

**T**he fourth and final International Training Workshop of the Interreg Europe PROGRESS project took place in the Italian city of Florence, at the end of March.

The workshop attracted over 100 participants from across Europe who learned about a range of Good Practices which have improved landscape governance for economic and environmental sustainability.

Representatives from the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA), the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) and

UCD's School of Geography participated in the event, while attendees from Irish local authorities, government departments, state agencies, NGOs and research institutes also joined the proceedings online.

A video on the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan developed by PROGRESS in collaboration with the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) was broadcast during the workshop.

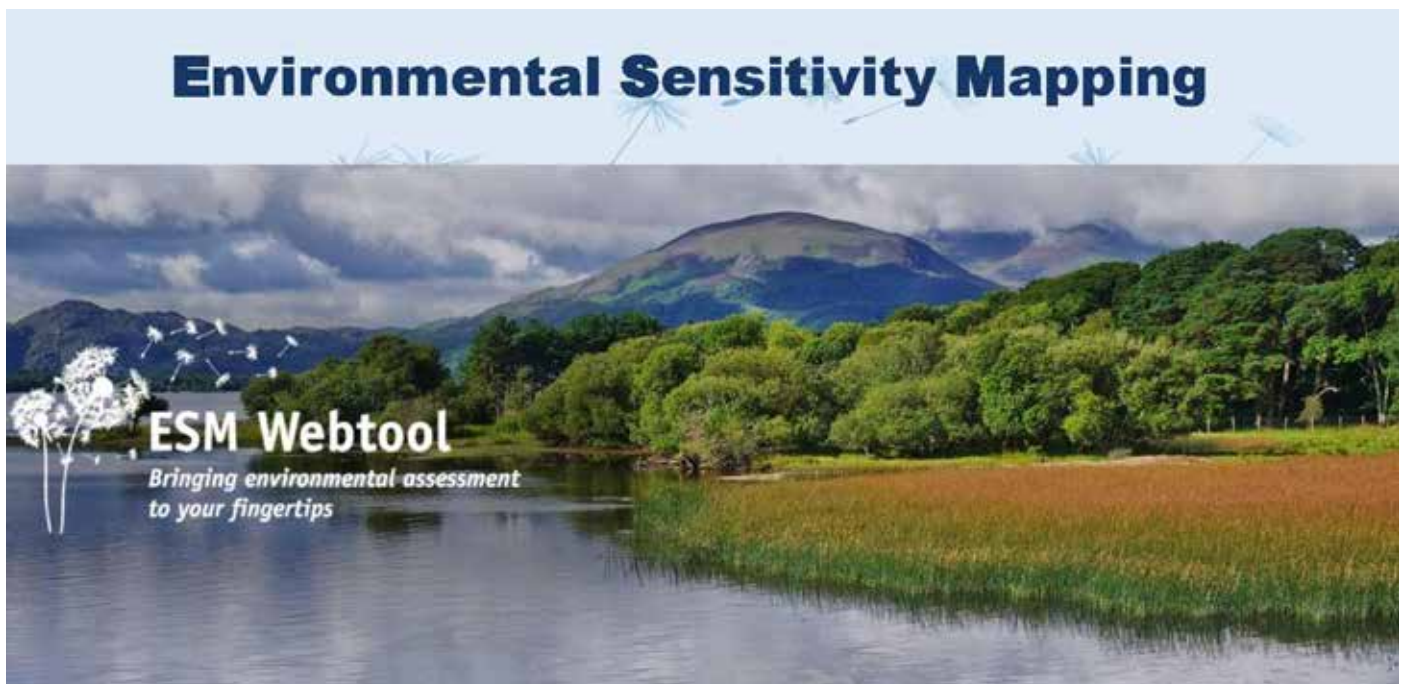
Hosted by the Association of Tuscany Regions (ANCI), the event was opened by Marina Lauri (ANCI) who outlined how participation on the PROGRESS project since 2019 has informed the development of the

forthcoming Italian law on mountain areas.

The opening session saw the premiere of the latest PROGRESS project video 'MyFarm Harta' on community-supported agriculture in Hungary.

The workshop was based around the three broad panel themes of 'analysis', 'agreements' and 'actions', all in relation to improved governance of the landscape.

**PRESENTATION OF ESM WEBTOOL**  
The first panel session on 'analysis' opened with a video on the Red Faith Good Practice, a methodology from Hungary



The ESM webtool is being used by Ireland's local authorities and regional assemblies with ongoing development and training undertaken by UCD and the All-Island Research Observatory. For further information visit <https://environmap.ie/>.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

which uses air borne technologies to improve the collection and analysis of forest data for decision making.

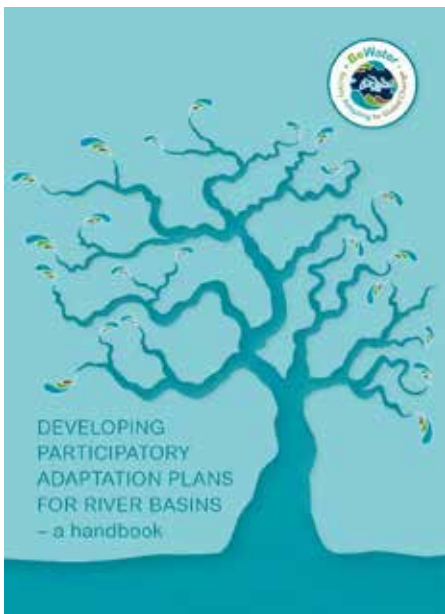
This was followed by three presentations of analysis tools at different scales. Ireland's presentation featured the Environmental Sensitivity Mapping (ESM) Webtool for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and spatial planning by Associate Professor Ainhoa González, UCD's School of Geography.

"The webtool is a freely accessible, evidence-based, environmental sensitivity mapping system that efficiently saves time and removes IT barriers. This makes it 'a game changer', for advancing environmental assessment and planning practice by fostering participative, informed and transparent decisions," she noted.

The webtool is now being used by local authorities and regional assemblies in Ireland with ongoing development and training undertaken by UCD and the All-Ireland Research Observatory, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR).

The ESM Webtool is hosted by Ordnance Survey Ireland and has already been included as a Good Practice on the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform.

The other two presentations included



Examples of governance approaches for adaptation, around rivers and coastal climate risks, included the BeWater Project manual.



Bryan Riney, Regional Planner at the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA), presented the findings on the Blue Green City project.

the virtual 3-D visualisation of forests to guide logging and land use decisions (Markus Korhonen, Forest 2.0, Finland), and regional management approaches in grassland landscapes (Anda Ruskule, VivaGrass, Baltic countries).

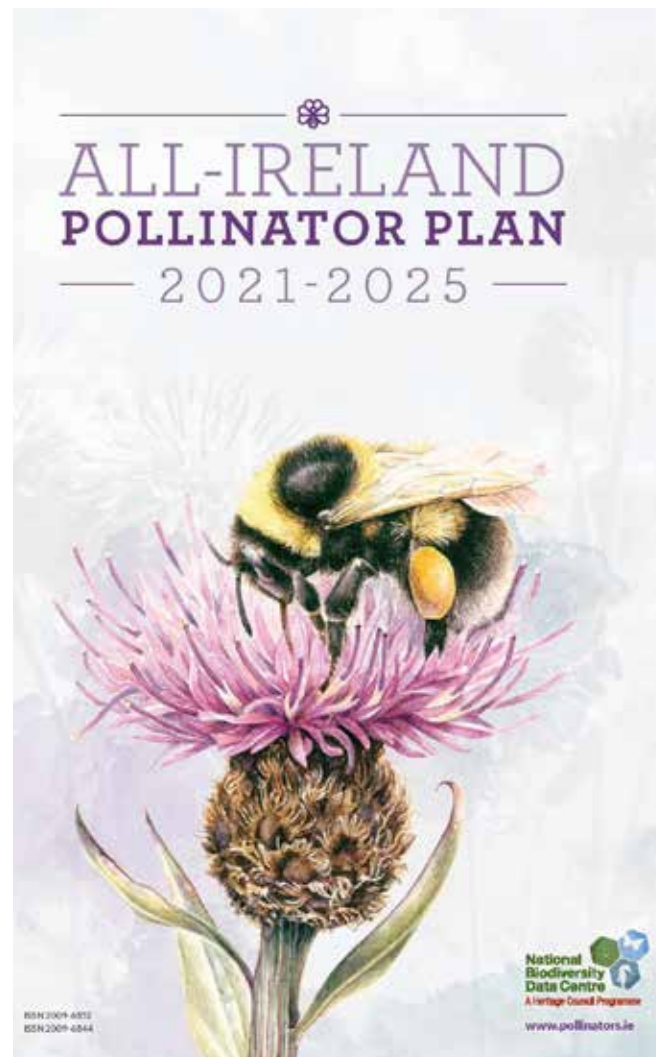
### REACHING AGREEMENT AT LANDSCAPE LEVEL

The Forests for Water in Catalonia video opened the second session, followed by two presentations on dialogue towards agreements for more sustainable landscapes.

Massimo Rovai from the University of Pisa introduced the Italian Communities for Food and Agro-Biodiversity initiative and argued that such targeted policies are public-social agreements between public authorities, non-profits and local consumers.

Annelies Broekman, (CREAF, Catalonia) then introduced several examples of governance approaches for adaptation, around rivers and coastal climate risks, including the BeWater Project manual.

This session closed with a lively discussion of the challenges associated with the preservation of ecosystem functioning in the context of



The plan is an extensive island-wide approach to reverse the decline of pollinating insects. For details visit <https://pollinators.ie>



transformative change, and the non-linearity of local level processes.

## BLUE GREEN CITY PROJECT

The final session of the workshop opened with a video of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, one of the most acknowledged Good Practices of the PROGRESS project. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is an extensive island-wide approach to reverse the decline of pollinating insects.

This was followed by a presentation by Bryan Riney, Regional Planner at the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA), on the Blue Green City project.

This is a sister Interreg Europe project to PROGRESS that focuses on improving policies that promote Blue Green Infrastructure (BGI) and Nature Based Solution (NBS).

Riney outlined the value of the SRA's participation in the project and how it is improving implementation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy by identifying solutions through interregional exchange of Good Practices and working with local authorities and other regional stakeholders to identify and address shared challenges.

The workshop concluded with a presentation on The Green Office by Attila Varga from Budapest's Municipality of Hegyvidék. The objective of Hungary's Small Green Space Stewardship Programme has been to provide an effective urban governance of ecosystem services.

**PROGRESS**  
Interreg Europe

European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

**PROmoting the Governance of  
Regional Ecosystem ServicesS**

**FOURTH HANDBOOK OF GOOD PRACTICES**  
Policy theme:  
**Improve landscape governance for economic and environmental  
sustainability.**

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Several Good Practice projects are included in the Final Project Handbook.

**PROGRESS**  
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European Union

My Interreg Europe

Approved projects

**PROmoting the Governance of Regional Ecosystem  
ServicesS**

For more information and updates visit the PROGRESS website <https://projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/progress/> and Twitter <https://twitter.com/InterregPROGRE1>.