



CLIMATE IRELAND ADAPTATION NETWORK SEMINAR 2025 – WORKSHOPSUMMARY REPORT

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Disclaimer

This seminar report summarises discussions from the Climate Ireland Adaptation Network annual seminar 2024 and is intended to reflect a range of perspectives shared during the event. It should be treated as a working document and not interpreted as representing the official views or endorsement of individual contributors or the EPA.

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Executive summary

The third annual Climate Ireland Adaptation Network seminar was held on 25th October 2025, in the Hilton hotel Kilmainham, Dublin. Organised and hosted by the EPA, the event was attended by people from over 51 organisations (Appendix B). It provided a platform for discussing advancements in climate adaptation at a national level while incorporating perspectives from a diverse range of sectors, national bodies and academics. The day was split into four sessions, an introductory session with updates from key national bodies in Ireland on their work in the adaptation space. The second session explored developments in adaptation policy and practice and featured presentations from three speakers working in climate adaptation and services, followed by a questions and answers segment. Topics included the role of reference trajectories and measurable objectives in guiding adaptation planning, and methods for embedding participatory and inclusive approaches into adaptation processes. The third session featured presentations from two speakers, followed by a Q&A segment, focusing on identifying and supporting vulnerable populations in adaptation practice and addressing data and resource gaps in local-scale adaptation planning. The day concluded with two interactive workshops that addressed critical adaptation and resilience challenges. The agenda is provided in Appendix A.

The seminar emphasised the importance of collaboration, knowledge sharing and co-creation among adaptation practitioners and stakeholders on issues such as just resilience, decision-making under uncertainty, and the value of interdisciplinary approaches. It provided inspiration from real-world examples through practical case studies, offering insights into successes, pitfalls and lessons learned. Based on the strong attendance, active engagement, and informal post-event feedback, the event was successful in terms of its core objective to build capacity and enhance the adaptation practitioner network in Ireland. Following the previous seminar, the EPA established four working groups within the Climate Ireland Adaptation Network to work on technical definition of resilience, just resilience, robust decision-making, and indicator development. These working groups are currently finalising their reports, incorporating learnings from the workshops.



1. Event overview

Session 1

Session 1 commenced with opening remarks by Dr. Darragh O'Neill (EPA), followed by organisational updates from:

- Dr. Paul McBride, Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment
- Jordan Delmar, Met Éireann and the National Framework for Climate Services,
- Katherine Dooley, EPA,
- Dr. Denise O'Sullivan, Marine Institute,
- Dr. Breda Maher, Climate action Regional Offices
- Dr. Bryn Canniffe, Climate Change Advisory Council Secretariat

Session 2

Session 2 featured presentations from three speakers working in climate adaptation and services followed by a questions and answers segment:

Jordan Delmar – Met Éireann

Topic: Establishing Reference Trajectories and Quantitative Objectives for Adaptation Planning

Jordan's presentation focused on the technical foundations of reference trajectories and their role in guiding climate adaptation. He explained how climate scenarios, such as those used in the NCCRA (based on RCPs), provide thresholds and time horizons that act as a shared roadmap for planning. These trajectories help ensure consistency across national, sectoral, and local levels by setting clear benchmarks for resilience efforts. His talk highlighted what reference trajectories are and their importance as robust data-driven tools

Dr. Christopher Phillips – EPA

Topic: Towards a resilient Ireland: Data-driven adaptation

Christopher discussed how reference trajectories can be integrated into adaptation planning to create measurable objectives and a shared understanding of resilience. He highlighted the need for clear, evidence-based targets to avoid fragmented planning and showed how indicators such as flood risk maps and biodiversity metrics turn data into actionable goals. His talk emphasised aligning adaptation efforts across national, sectoral, and local levels, updating technical standards, and using scenario testing to ensure plans remain robust under uncertainty. He concluded with next steps: embedding trajectories and objectives in all planning levels, developing guidance and participatory tools, and closing gaps in national and sectoral support.

Dr. Denise McCullagh – MaREI

Topic: Designing Participatory and Inclusive Adaptation Processes

Denise's presentation examined practical methods for embedding participatory approaches into adaptation planning, such as citizen assemblies, community workshops, co-design sessions, participatory mapping, and scenario planning exercises. She highlighted the importance of inclusive

engagement across government, sectors, and communities to ensure accountability and equitable outcomes. Her talk showcased projects and case studies including REACHOUT, TalX, TalX2, and BluePrint, which demonstrate how participatory tools and citizen science methods can strengthen adaptation learning and foster co-created solutions. These approaches help build trust, improve transparency, and create adaptive strategies that reflect diverse perspectives

Session 3

Session 3 featured presentations from two speakers working in climate adaptation and services followed by a questions and answers segment:

Dr. Stephen Flood – CCAC

Topic: Identifying and Supporting Vulnerable Populations in Adaptation Practice

Stephen's presentation focused on the technical and policy challenges of identifying marginalised and vulnerable groups within adaptation planning. He explored frameworks for mapping vulnerability and integrating social equity into adaptation tools to ensure resilience strategies are inclusive and fair. His talk emphasised the need for approaches that address social vulnerabilities alongside environmental and economic risks, creating adaptation plans that prioritise equity and protect those most at risk.

Dr. Sabrina Dekker – Dublin Metropolitan CARO

Topic: Addressing Data and Resource Gaps in Local-Scale Adaptation Practice

Sabrina's presentation focused on the practical challenges faced by local authorities and smaller organisations in developing and applying resilience indicators. She emphasised the importance of shared vision and collaboration. A key message was the need to share data and improve access to climate information to support consistent planning. Sabrina also highlighted the role of climate readiness toolkits as practical resources for building capacity and ensuring that adaptation strategies are aligned across different levels of governance.

Session 4

Session 4 featured two workshops, each workshop had a main theme, and two questions posed to participants for discussion. At the end of each workshop a designated rapporteur from each table summarised the main discussion points.

Workshop 1- shaping adaptation pathways: from principles to practice.

Theme: This workshop included group discussions guided key questions on setting measurable adaptation objectives, ensuring equity in climate planning, and strengthening community influence in decision-making.

Questions:

Q1: How can we create adaptation goals that are:

- Measurable: easy to track and assess progress.
- Flexible: able to adjust when conditions change.
- Responsive to uncertainty: designed to work even when the future is unclear.

- Robust for long-term planning: strong enough to guide decisions over many years.

Q2: How can we ensure that strategic climate goals and pathways include equity and prioritise protection for the most vulnerable?

Workshop 2- Designing resilience together: practical steps for inclusive adaptation.

Theme: This workshop included group discussions guided by questions on creating inclusive adaptation tools, bringing real community experiences into planning, and building local capacity for long-term resilience.

Questions:

Q1: On a practical level, how can we design adaptation tools and standards that ensure:

- Inclusive decision-making (everyone has a voice)
- Fair access to resources
- Extra support for communities facing poverty, health challenges, or high-risk locations?

Q2: What practical steps can help local authorities and small organisations get reliable climate data and overcome gaps in information?

2. Summary of workshop discussions

Each of the workshops elicited good discussion and a range of responses, which are summarised below.

Workshop 1

Q1: How can we create adaptation goals that are measurable, flexible, responsive to uncertainty, and robust for long-term planning?

Participants agreed that adaptation goals should be measurable and easy to track, with milestones that can be monitored annually. There was strong support for using KPIs such as the number of communities engaged, events delivered, investment levels, and reductions in energy disruption. Some highlighted the importance of measuring both qualitative and quantitative outcomes, including societal gains and improvements in water quality.

Flexibility was emphasised as essential, with goals needing to adapt to changing conditions, financial and regulatory shifts, and evolving community priorities. Several participants noted that systems supporting adaptation must be adaptive themselves, and that feedback loops and pivoting when required should be built in. The need for robust, science-based goals was widely recognised, with suggestions to embed climate adaptation into organisational vision and planning frameworks.

There were differing views on the scale of goals. Some advocated for national-level ring-fenced funding and common assessment models, while others stressed locally specific solutions under a national umbrella framework. Examples such as active travel were cited as delivering both mitigation and adaptation benefits. Participants also discussed the importance of defining starting points, avoiding maladaptation, and co-creating goals with communities. Specific – Measurable – Achievable – Relevant – Time-bound (SMART) objectives were mentioned frequently, alongside innovative

approaches such as AI, digital twins, and international case studies. Concerns were raised about the lack of KPIs and the need for periodic updates to models as new data becomes available.

Q2: How can we ensure that strategic climate goals and pathways include equity and prioritise protection for the most vulnerable?

Equity and justice were considered fundamental to adaptation planning. Many participants stressed that climate change disproportionately impacts vulnerable groups, and that social impact must be built into adaptation strategies. Vulnerability mapping, relocation schemes, and tiered approaches to infrastructure protection were highlighted as priorities. There was discussion about national insurance mechanisms to support adaptation measures and the need for redundancy in critical infrastructure.

Participants emphasised strong stakeholder engagement and co-creation of goals with communities, using tools such as social indices and CSO data to identify and address vulnerability. Creative arts and cultural elements were suggested as ways to engage communities and ensure all voices are heard. Examples of low-regret options, such as Marina Park in Cork, and community-led projects like Acorn Farm in Derry and Connswater Greenway in Belfast, were shared as models for integrating social benefits with climate action.

Challenges included the resource-intensive nature of long-term projects and the difficulty of maintaining local presence, with calls for local champions and embedded community officers. Concerns were raised about maladaptation and the risk of reinforcing inequality, such as infrastructure investments that fail to serve disadvantaged areas. Overall, participants agreed that mainstreaming climate considerations into other sectors, aligning networks, and ensuring equitable outcomes are critical for successful adaptation.

Workshop 2

Q1: How can we design adaptation tools and standards that ensure inclusive decision-making, fair access to resources, and extra support for vulnerable communities?

Participants highlighted the need for tools that are accessible, adaptable, and embedded into everyday processes. A strong emphasis was placed on inclusivity ensuring all voices are heard and avoiding dominance by the loudest stakeholders. Suggestions included creating platforms that host comprehensive, downloadable databases and linking policies directly to schemes. Existing tools can be tailored to specific projects, but gaps remain in ensuring fair access and addressing uneven experiences across local authorities.

Community engagement emerged as a priority, with proposals for proactive outreach, surveys in local hubs, and leveraging trusted actors such as Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), schools, and Public Participation Networks (PPNs). The idea of appointing full-time community climate officers was widely supported to build trust and maintain continuity. Participants stressed the importance of combining scientific and social data for a holistic view, complemented by impact assessments and early warning systems.

Flexibility and practicality were recurring themes. Tools should use common language, avoid technical jargon, and integrate multiple communication modes. Innovative approaches such as VR/3D visualisation, digital forms for active travel, and nature-based solutions were discussed, alongside upstream interventions and resilience-by-design principles. Education and cultural engagement (e.g., through GAA) were seen as critical for empowerment.

Concerns included uneven EU funding access, limited local authority capacity, and the risk of maladaptation. Participants agreed that adaptation tools must be designed into everything, prioritise socio-economic vulnerabilities, and support co-benefit solutions. Ultimately, inclusivity, transparency, and adaptability were identified as essential for creating standards that meet current needs while preparing for future challenge

Q2: What practical steps can help local authorities and small organisations get reliable climate data and overcome gaps in information?

Participants acknowledged that local risk assessments are essential, with calls for semi-quantitative approaches tailored to local authority contexts. Standardisation and centralisation of data were highlighted as priorities to streamline processes and reduce fragmentation across departments. This would help build local expertise and ensure consistency in addressing differences in experiences and risks.

Improved mapping and better integration of existing data were recurring themes. Suggestions included creating natural damage registers or apps that allow households and businesses to view historical impacts, as well as sharing consultant data and leveraging other local authority groups already driving this work. Collecting data after severe weather events and incorporating local geographic knowledge were seen as critical steps to fill gaps.

Access to resources and infrastructure resilience were emphasised, particularly for lifeline roads and population health standards. Participants noted that data must be easy to navigate and linked clearly to climate considerations. Citizen science was proposed to fill gaps in certain cases, alongside partnerships for emotional support and engagement with diverse sectors, including artists, to bring communities into project design.

The importance of collaboration and inclusivity was underscored, with multiple perspectives needed to inform adaptation strategies. Participants stressed that reliable data should underpin decisions on coastal projects, flood risk mapping, and future uncertainty planning. Overall, standardisation, better data sharing, and community-driven approaches were identified as key to overcoming information gaps and supporting effective adaptation.

3. Next steps

Following the initial proposal to establish working groups within the Climate Ireland Adaptation Network at the 2024 CIAN seminar, the CIAN team successfully set up four groups focused on resilience definition, just resilience, robust decision-making, and indicator development. Each group held three workshop sessions, gathering extensive feedback and input from members. The team is currently drafting four comprehensive reports based on the outputs of these sessions. The reports will synthesise discussions, perspectives, and insights on key topics, incorporating international examples and case studies for comparative learning. They will also reflect priorities raised by participants, including measurable and flexible adaptation goals, equity considerations, inclusive decision-making, and practical steps for improving data access and overcoming gaps. Once finalised, these reports will be circulated to CIAN members and will inform EPA and national adaptation work, providing actionable guidance for practitioners and supporting the development of a shared framework for climate resilience.

Participants at the seminar highlighted a range of themes, which may be useful considerations in supporting adaptation practitioners and strengthening future planning for resilience:

- Shared frameworks for resilience goals that are measurable, flexible, and science-based, incorporating equity considerations.
- Definition of KPIs (e.g., communities engaged, events delivered, investment levels) and associated processes for periodic updates as new data becomes available.
- Mechanisms for co-creation with communities, ensuring goals avoid maladaptation and reflect local priorities.
- Improved vulnerability mapping and exploration of tiered infrastructure protection strategies for high-risk populations.
- Standardised and centralised climate data to reduce fragmentation and improve accessibility.
- Improved mapping tools and data integration, including options for natural damage registers or apps for historical impact tracking.
- Citizen science initiatives to help fill data gaps and strengthen local engagement.
- Innovative approaches, such as VR/3D visualisation and nature-based solutions, to enhance planning and engagement.
- Local capacity building by appointing community climate officers and identifying local champions to maintain trust and continuity.
- Strengthened education and cultural engagement through partnerships with schools, SMEs, and community organisations.
- Collaboration across networks, including local authorities, SMEs, and community groups, to ensure fair access to resources and co-benefit solutions.

These themes reflect the collective insights of participants and aim to guide adaptation practitioners in developing more inclusive, data-driven, and resilient approaches to climate adaptation planning.

Appendix A: Seminar agenda

Date: 25th November 2025

Time: 10:00 – 16:00

Venue: Hilton Kilmainham, Dublin

09:30-10:00 Tea & coffee and registration

10:00-11:00 Sector updates and Insights (Dr. Darragh O'Neill, Programme Manager-Evidence Programme)

- Opening remarks: Dr. Darragh O'Neill, EPA
- DCEE updates on policy, SAP, international work: Paul McBride, DCEE
- Met Éireann update on data, NFCS & TRANSLATE: Jordan Delmar, MÉ
- EPA adaptation updates: Katherine Dooley, EPA
- Marine Institute updates: Denise O'Sullivan, MI
- CAROs/LACAPs updates: Breda Maher, Eastern and Midlands CARO
- CCAC update: Bryn Canniffe, CCAC Secretariat

Q and A session

11:00-11:15 Establishing Reference Trajectories and Quantitative Objectives for Adaptation Planning – Jordan Delmar, Met Éireann and Dr. Christopher Phillips, EPA.

- *This session will focus on the role of reference trajectories and measurable objectives in guiding climate adaptation. It will explore how these tools can support consistent planning across national, sectoral, and local levels, and ensure that resilience efforts are grounded in evidence-based targets.*

11:15-11:30 Designing Participatory and Inclusive Adaptation Processes (Dr. Denise McCullagh, MaREI)

- *This session will examine methods for embedding participatory approaches (E.g. citizen assemblies, community workshops, co-design sessions, participatory mapping, scenario planning exercises) into adaptation planning. It will address the need for inclusive engagement across government, sectors, and communities, and explore how participatory methods can support continued adaptation learning, accountability, and equitable outcomes.*

11:30-11:45 Q and A

11:45-12:00 Tea & coffee break

12:00-12:15 Identifying and Supporting Vulnerable Populations in Adaptation Practice
(Dr. Stephen Flood, CCAC)

- *This session will focus on the technical and policy challenges of identifying marginalised and vulnerable groups. It will explore frameworks for mapping vulnerability, integrating social equity into adaptation tools, and ensuring that resilience strategies are inclusive.*

12:15-12:30 Addressing Data and Resource Gaps in Local scale Adaptation Practice
(Dr. Sabrina Dekker, Dublin Metropolitan CARO)

- *This session will focus on the practical challenges faced by local authorities and small organisations in developing and applying resilience indicators. It will explore solutions for overcoming data limitations, improving technical capacity, and reducing reliance on external consultants.*

12:30-12:45 Q and A

12:45-12:50 EPA setting the scene

12:50-13:50 Lunch

13:50-14:45 Workshop session 1 - Shaping adaptation pathways: from principles to practice.

- *This workshop will include group discussions guided key questions on setting measurable adaptation objectives, ensuring equity in climate planning, and strengthening community influence in decision-making.*

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14:45-15:00 Tea & coffee break

15:00-15:55 Workshop session 2: Designing resilience together: practical steps for inclusive adaptation.

- *This workshop will include group discussions guided by questions on creating inclusive adaptation tools, bringing real community experiences into planning, and building local capacity for long-term resilience.*

15:55-16:00 Closing remarks (Dr. Darragh O'Neill, EPA)

16:00 End

Appendix B: CIAN Seminar attendees

108 Sign ups

51 organisations represented.

Arup	EirGrid	Louth County Council
AWN Consulting	Environmental Protection Agency	Marine Institute
Central Bank	ESB	Maynooth University
Clare County Council	Fáilte Ireland	Meath County Council
Cork City Council	Galway City Council	National Parks & Wildlife Service
Cork County Council	Greenbelt	NTMA
Department of Agriculture	Healthy Home Check	Office of Public Works
Department of Finance	ICMSA	People Planet Change
Department of Housing	Inland Fisheries Ireland	Pobal
Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment	Irish Rail	Roscommon County Council
Department of the Taoiseach	Irish Water	Teagasc
Department of Transport	JF Whelan	Tipperary County Council
DNV	Kildare County Council	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
Donegal County Council	KPMG	Trinity College Dublin
Drury Communications	Leitrim County Council	University College Cork
Dublin City Council	Limerick City & County Council	University College Dublin
Dublin City University	Longford County Council	Wicklow County Council