

Kerry Convention Bureau Case Study



Overview

The EOE conference is the annual event of the European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning. This was the first occasion that the event was held in Ireland. This year's conference was hosted by Munster Technological University (MTU) on its Tralee campus. MTU holds the UNESCO Chair in Inclusive PE, Sport, Recreation and Fitness.

The EOE Network is a vibrant association of outdoor education practitioners and academics from around Europe, with other delegates attending from across the globe. The three-day conference reflected that mix with practitioner case studies, practical workshops and academic presentations.

The EOE conference is a key networking event for social and youth workers, teachers and educators, students and academics. The theme of the 2019 conference was Diversity and Inclusion in Outdoor & Experiential Learning.

Snapshot

Event Name: European Outdoor Educators Conference

Event Dates: 25th-27th September 2019

Location: Munster Technological University, Tralee

Delegates: International: 110 | Domestic: 94



Reason for organisation selecting destination/venue

MTU has been running outdoor education programmes for over 25 years, and has an international reputation for including people with disability in outdoor adventure.

The conference was hosted at the new Kerry Sports Academy building, on campus at MTU Tralee. This facility features large tiered lecture hall, and various rooms for practical and theory based break-out sessions, and was designed for universal access.

The proximity of high quality outdoor venues along the Wild Atlantic Way for practical workshops was a key consideration in the awarding of the conference.

Locations such as Fenit Harbour, Banna Beach, Ballyseedy Woods and the woods and parklands on campus were used throughout the event.



Issues, challenges and triumphs

The EoE network has at its heart connecting people with their environments. Therefore environmental/ sustainability issues were a core ethos.

Although many delegates were travelling from Europe and the rest of the world, the conference adapted a 'sustainability agenda' as a core feature. Conference organisers, partly in line with delegate demand, adopted vegan and vegetarian food as the norm for the conference section of the event. For the conference gala dinner, the organisers worked with our hotel partner The Meadowlands Hotel to create a unique menu featuring locally sourced produce where possible, including Atlantic seafood from Dingle.

The conference served 1,400 teas and coffees over the duration of the 3 days, and did not use any single use cups. Delegates were given a custom keep-cup on arrival, which was used for tea/ coffee breaks. Only Fair Trade tea/ coffee was served. Conferencing is thirsty work, but once again the 200 delegates did not use a single plastic water bottle: Each delegate received a reusable drinks bottle, sponsored by Cork based company Cascade Designs, Middleton. Water fountains were provided throughout the building.

Sharing the building with the entire health & leisure department in the middle of the semester, as well as many community users.

Conference organisers faced a challenge in executing an event where English was the official language of the conference, but delegates were coming from 22 different countries.

Listening only to speaker presentations all day, which are not in your first language, is exhausting. Therefore designing the programme to combine both oral presentations and active outdoor sessions was crucial to the success of the conference, and created a fantastic opportunity to engage with the Atlantic landscape here in Kerry.

In the 25 year history of the organisation, this was the largest ever EoE conference, and the feedback from delegates about their time in Kerry was very positive.

The prominent inclusion of the sustainability agenda in this conference has influenced the EoE board to the point where it is guaranteed to be included centrally in all their future European conferences.



The execution

Organisers worked with various stakeholders to execute this innovative conference.

A serviced conference campsite was set up on campus at MTU, beside the new Kerry Sport Academy building and a significant minority of delegates chose to brave the Autumnal chill and set up camp for the duration.

As an active learning institution, students from a variety of programmes gained valuable experience through supporting and engaging with the conference.

Students from across the institute including the new BA (Hons) Event Management degree provided delegate liaison throughout and led a 'walking bus' from the conference hotel to the venue each morning. This limited the use of cars in keeping with the sustainability agenda of the conference.

Local bus providers were used to transport delegates to outdoor activities at local beaches & hiking trails, thus limiting the need for multiple cars/ taxis.

Books of abstracts, delegates lists etc. were all supplied electronically to delegates, thus ensuring minimal use of paper for the conference.

EOE Conference 2019

**LOW IMPACT EVENT
SUSTAINABILITY
LOW CARBON FOOTPRINT**

Vegan and vegetarian food as the norm for the event



One evening celebrating Irish beef and one evening with Atlantic Seafood

Purposful sourcing of food ingredients with signature dishes with local produce



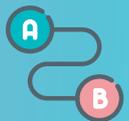
No Single Use Plastic items anywhere

Fairtrade Coffee



Keep Cup and Drinks Bottle in every delegate bag

"Walking Bus" from the conference hotel



Buses rather than cars for transport to practical activities

Minimum use of paper - using electronic means for distributing the book of abstracts etc.



Special Kerry touches

Delegates were also given unique individual name badges made from compostable wood, which was harvested and made on campus at MTU.

The amazing conference banquet at Meadowlands Hotel featured fantastic locally sourced produce including Castlegregory carrots, fresh mackerel Baile na nGall, and even crab apples and elderberries from north Kerry hedgerows!

Local boutique street food and private catering company, Rustic Pantry was also engaged to provide catering during the event, with the entire menu selected showcasing local and sustainable ingredients.

Most memorable aspect of the entire event

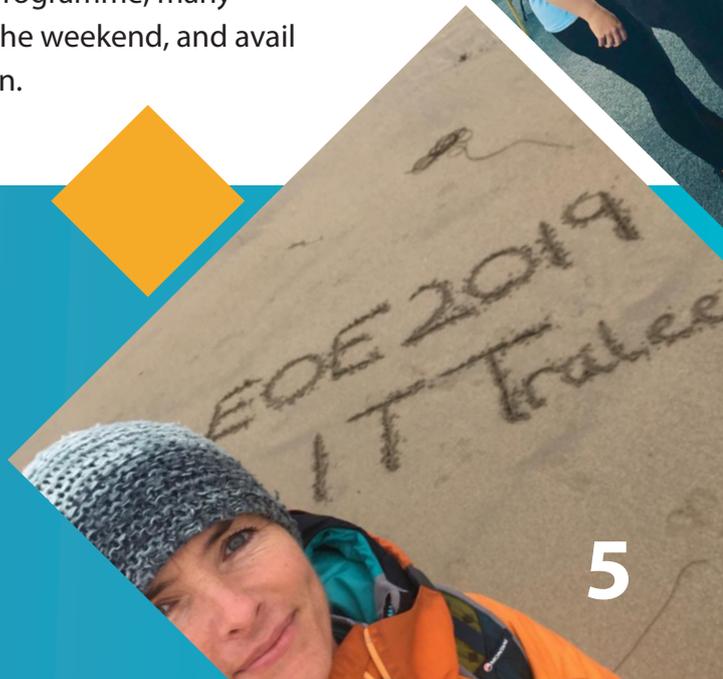
The most positive aspect of this entire conference was the sense of community built among the delegates from all over the world, which reflected the warmth of welcome they received in County Kerry, and at MTU.

Pre and post touring undertaken in the destination and wider region

While no formal tours etc. were part of the programme, many delegates chose to continue their visit into the weekend, and avail of the huge range of attractions in the region.

The verdict

While this conference did not set out to be carbon neutral, it had at its heart a shared commitment to sustainability/ low carbon principles among delegates and conference organisers.



Support from Kerry Convention Bureau, Fáilte Ireland and Meet in Ireland

Kerry Convention Bureau were on hand to provide support and assistance as required throughout. MTU met with the KCB team during the bid preparation stage and were given assistance to assess available financial supports via Meet In Irelands Financial Support Program. Fáilte Irelands' Wild Atlantic Way team were also engaged with and provided destination banners showcasing the region to be used as event backdrops.



Testimonials

Anders Szczepanaski from Linköping University, Sweden outlined, "It's wonderful to be here in Tralee, Kerry with its beautiful landscape for this unique conference, where people from all over the world can share knowledge on the growth of outdoor experiential learning".

Speaking about the ethos of the event, **Mr. Tomás Aylward**, conference organiser and lecturer in outdoor learning at MTU commented, "This was the 18th and largest ever EoE conference, and its theme of diversity and inclusion are pertinent to a modern society. MTU were delighted to be again leading the way in Europe in this area, through our Health and Leisure Department, UNESCO chair and CARA centre. The fact that we are focussing on sustainability in the week of global action on climate change is also important".

Any other information you would like to share

Why not consider Munster Technological University and the wonderful new Kerry Sports Academy building as a venue for your next conference! Talk to Kerry Convention Bureau today about your event requirements and we will facilitate an introduction to the team at MTU.



MTU

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Mumhan
Munster Technological University