

INTERNATIONAL ECO-CITIES INITIATIVE

International Eco-Cities Initiative December 2015

Welcome to the latest issue of the International Eco-Cities Initiative newsletter. The bulletin (published three times per year) provides information about our research, events and publications, and contributes to analysis and discourse on 'eco-cities' and sustainable urbanism of various kinds across the world.

In this issue:

- New Projects: 'Smart Eco Cities' and 'Monsoon Assemblages'
- New Publications: 'Reframing the Problem of Public Space in the Sustainable City' and 'Eco-cities and Sustainable Urbanism'
- Partnership with Connect4Climate
- People: Youri Dayot, Tessa Gooding, Rob Cowley

New Projects

Smart Eco Cities

We have partnered up with an international consortium of researchers from the UK, China, the Netherlands, France, and Germany, to undertake a three-year (2015-2018) project on 'Smart eco-cities for a green economy: a comparative study of Europe and China'. As part of the UK team, funded by the ESRC, we are working with researchers from King's College London – who also act as coordinators of the international consortium – and the Universities of Cardiff and Plymouth. The international partnership is made possible through a joint initiative by the national research agencies of the five countries, with the aim of furthering collaborative research on the Green Economy. Our project aims to provide the first systematic comparative analysis of eco-city initiatives in China and Europe. It will explore the ways in which the 'smart-eco' agenda becomes spatially embedded and translated into practices of experimental innovation, and what conclusions can be drawn about how successful these experimental spaces are in catalysing broader transitions towards more sustainable urban development.

- [find out more](#) about the Smart Eco Cities project

Monsoon Assemblages

Our colleague Professor Lindsay Bremner has been awarded a major research grant of €1.5m from the European Research Council (ERC) for a research project on 'Monsoon Assemblages'. The research takes the form of a design-driven enquiry into the impacts of changing monsoon climates in three of

power failures, floods, disease outbreaks, damage to property and loss of life. This project treats the monsoon as an organising principle of urban life, rather than an 'external' phenomenon, and involves an interdisciplinary team of post-doctoral and doctoral researchers from the spatial disciplines and the environmental humanities. Simon Joss will be among the members of the Advisory Group for this five-year project.

- [find out more](#) about the Monsoon Assemblages project

New Publications

Conference Paper: 'Reframing the Problem of Public Space in the Sustainable City'

Rob Cowley recently presented a paper at the 'Ideal City: Between Myth and Reality' conference in Urbino (Italy), organised by the Regional and Urban Development research committee of the International Sociological Association. The paper, drawing on his doctoral research, argues that it may be problematic that 'sustainable' public spaces are often envisioned in very compliant, orderly terms. It introduces a new model for thinking about urban space in terms of assemblages of 'civic' and 'emergent' publicness.

- [download the paper as a pdf](#) from the conference website

Encyclopedia Article: 'Eco-Cities and Sustainable Urbanism'

The new edition of the International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences (Elsevier, 2015) includes a chapter by Simon Joss on 'Eco-cities and Sustainable Urbanism'. This new edition of the encyclopedia is much expanded, and now contains a whole section on Urban Studies and Planning with over 75 chapters on topics such as resilience, environmental planning, social justice, smart cities, transport planning, megaprojects, regeneration, and urban entrepreneurialism. It should be a useful reference work for anybody looking to gain a broad overview of contemporary issues in sustainable urban planning and development. Please contact Simon Joss (josss@westminster.ac.uk) if you would like a complimentary copy of his chapter.

- [view the chapter](#)

Partnership with Connect4Climate

The International Eco-Cities Initiative has entered into a new knowledge partnership with Connect4Climate, an initiative launched jointly by the World Bank, the Italian Ministry of Environment, and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, which aims to promote solutions and to empower people to take action on climate change. The partnership is driven by a common interest in exchanging knowledge with wider communities, inspiring young people to become involved in innovation and research-for-practice, and exploring how the city can create spaces for shared social, cultural and technological learning about more sustainable futures.

- [find out more](#)

People

Youri Dayot: Visiting Researcher

We would like to welcome Youri Dayot, from the Grenoble Institute of Political Science (France), who has joined us as a Visiting Researcher for the current academic year. He will be working with Simon Joss on a research project looking at the social and political aspects of 'smart cities' from an international comparative perspective.

- [see full news item on our website](#)

Tessa Gooding: New Doctoral Researcher

We are very pleased to announce that Tessa Gooding will be joining us in January to begin a doctoral research project on 'One Planet Living: Measuring the Impacts of the One Planet Living Framework'. This project is at the centre of a new collaboration between the International Eco-Cities Initiative and Bioregional, a globally active social enterprise working in the field of sustainability. Tessa's project aims

- [see full news item on our website](#)

Dr Robert Cowley

Congratulations to Rob Cowley, who successfully defended his PhD thesis on 'Eco-Cities: Technological Showcases or Public Spaces?' earlier this month. He was examined by Prof Harriet Bulkeley (Durham University) and Dr Tassilo Herrschell (University of Westminster). His research project, beginning in 2011, included case studies of the *EcoDistricts* initiative in Portland, Oregon (USA), and Sejong City (South Korea). The full electronic version of the thesis will soon be available online.

- [see Rob's profile on our website](#)

LinkedIn Discussion Forum

The 'International Eco-Cities Forum', our online discussion board, now has over 480 members, including researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. It invites contributions from around the world, aimed at discussing and sharing information, reflections and practical learning on sustainable urbanism in its various forms.

- [Join the International Eco-Cities Forum](#)

Further Information

For more information about the International Eco-Cities Initiative and to sign up for news and events, please see our [website](#).

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