

INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES SIG WEBINAR LECTURE 2023: 'AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR AFFORESTATION IN IRELAND'

The Interdisciplinary Perspectives Special Interest Group (IPSIG) will once again be holding its annual webinar lecture on **Wednesday, 22nd of November 2023, 13:00-14:30** (British time).

Our speaker is Dr. Martha O'Hagan, Associate Professor of Finance, at Trinity Business School, Trinity College Dublin.



Martha will deliver a lecture on 'An Investigation into the Financial Incentives for Afforestation in Ireland'. Despite having been over 80% afforested many centuries ago, Ireland now has one of the lowest levels of forest cover in Europe, 11% compared to a European average of 36%, and of that 11%, only 2% is comprised of native species, the remainder of mono-species plantations of non-native species such as Sitka Spruce. Government policy to increase afforestation has not worked, with less than 10% of the annual planting target being achieved each year.

Landowners need to be paid for the ecosystem services that their land provides, timber supply has a market value but is just one ecosystem service provided by woodlands. Habitat for biodiversity, impact on water, air and soil quality, carbon sequestration and amenity value are other important ecosystem services that are currently not being valued or rewarded. The FOREST project undertaken by Botany, Business, Geography, Engineering and Economics examines aspects of forestry in Ireland, such as the design of financial incentives, behavioural and social aspects, and comparisons with alternative land use such as for solar and wind energy.

The project explores the use of financial instruments to fund nature restoration, by the public sector, by businesses and by private citizens. An interdisciplinary approach is needed to bring together botany, geography and business, to design financing mechanisms that are socially just, ecologically sound and financially viable.

The Speaker

Dr Martha O'Hagan is an Associate Professor of Finance at Trinity Business School. Her research is in the area of Behavioural Finance, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Finance. Her work has been published in journals including the British Journal of Management, The European Journal of Finance, Small Business Economics, International Journal of Finance and Economics and the International Business Review. Prior to completing her PhD, she worked in Investment Banking in London for Bank of America and Credit Suisse and in Dublin for Bank of Ireland. Martha has received many awards for her teaching – in 2019 she was shortlisted for the Provost's Teaching Excellence Award and won it in 2020. She has been awarded the Trinity Business School Teaching Excellence Award every year between 2018 and 2023 and won a Teaching Hero Award in 2021. She received an Irish Research Council Laureate Award in May 2022 for a 4 year research project on Sustainable Investing by Pension Funds and is also a researcher on [FOREST \[tcd.ie\]](https://forest.tcd.ie/), an interdisciplinary research project on forestry in Ireland, investigating the financial and behavioural incentives for forestation in Ireland. She joined the steering committee of Natural Capital Ireland and Business for Biodiversity Ireland in 2023.