

Islands as Lighthouses for Sustainability

Monday 10 November 2025

VENUE: Daiwa House Ishibashi Nobuo Memorial Hall, Daiwa Ubiquitous Computing Research Building, Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies, The University of Tokyo (7-3-1, Hongo, Bunkyo, Tokyo 113-0033, Japan)

https://webpark5033.sakura.ne.jp/wp8/?page_id=84

Sustainability and sustainable development are becoming more urgent globally. New approaches and new paradigms are needed. Islands represent unique and valuable case studies for advancing these approaches and the science of sustainability and sustainable development. Within the current global economic and social system, islands often experience economic, social, political, and cultural marginalization. At the same time, they are on the frontlines of climate change impacts as both biodiversity hotspots and areas of high extinction risk. From a methodological and scientific perspective, islands have often been cited as ideal “laboratories” for studying, understanding, and measuring sustainability. Their clearly defined geographical boundaries and easily delineated resource flows make them analytically manageable and conceptually illuminating.

Islands, islanders and islandness are amongst the many key features in the culture, economy and geography of Greece and Japan, two archipelagic and maritime countries that celebrated their 125th anniversary of diplomatic relations last year. This workshop is organised under the auspices of the Embassy of Greece in Japan and is an initiative of the Erasmus Mundus programme Islands and Sustainability (<https://islandsmaster.eu>) and with the involvement of partners in the Erasmus Mundus programme Euroculture (<https://www.euroculturemaster.eu>) and is co-organised by the University of Tokyo, the University of Groningen, the University of the Aegean, the University of Osaka and Tohoku University.

The workshop brings together leading academic scholars in island and related studies with an aim to move beyond the laboratories view and instead to frame them as lighthouses for sustainability, capable of guiding the wider global economic and social system towards the sustainable practices that islands are often already practiced or have early adopted. Rather than test subjects, they should be appreciated for their agility, resilience, and adaptive capacity.

The workshop (including the tea/coffee breaks for those attending in person) is open to everyone. There is no participation fee but there is a need to register (and specify whether you are attending onsite or online).

Workshop programme (Japan Standard Time):

13:00 - 13:15: *Opening of the workshop*; Prof Dimitris Ballas (University of Groningen), Prof Thanasis Kizos (University of the Aegean), Prof Osamu Saito (University of Tokyo/IGES) and Nicolaos Argyros (Ambassador of Greece in Japan)

13:15 – 13:35 *Why Islands? Introducing Island Studies; from Insularity to Islandness*; Prof Thanasis Kizos (University of the Aegean)

13:35-13:55 *Islands, Biodiversity and Ecosystems services: Past, present and future* Prof Osamu Saito and Prof. Shizuka Hashimoto (University of Tokyo)

13:55: 14:15 *Food Supply Chain and food packaging in island economies*, Prof Kazuyo Matsubae (Tohoku University)

14:15-14:30 Discussion

14:30-14:45 Tea / Coffee Tea Break Discussion

14:45 – 15:25: *Health and Happiness on Islands*

Prof Dimitris Ballas (University of Groningen) and Prof Tomoki Nakaya (Tohoku University)

15:25 – 15:45: *Sustainability of Living Functions and Industries on Islands: Some Cases in Japan*, Prof Kenji Tsutsumi (University of Osaka)

15:45-16:00 Discussion

16:00 – 16:10: Tea / Coffee Break

16:10 – 16:50: *Island Futures Panel discussion* (to be confirmed)

16:50-17:00: Closing remarks, Prof. Kazuhiko Takeuchi (The University of Tokyo / Institute for Global Environmental Strategies)