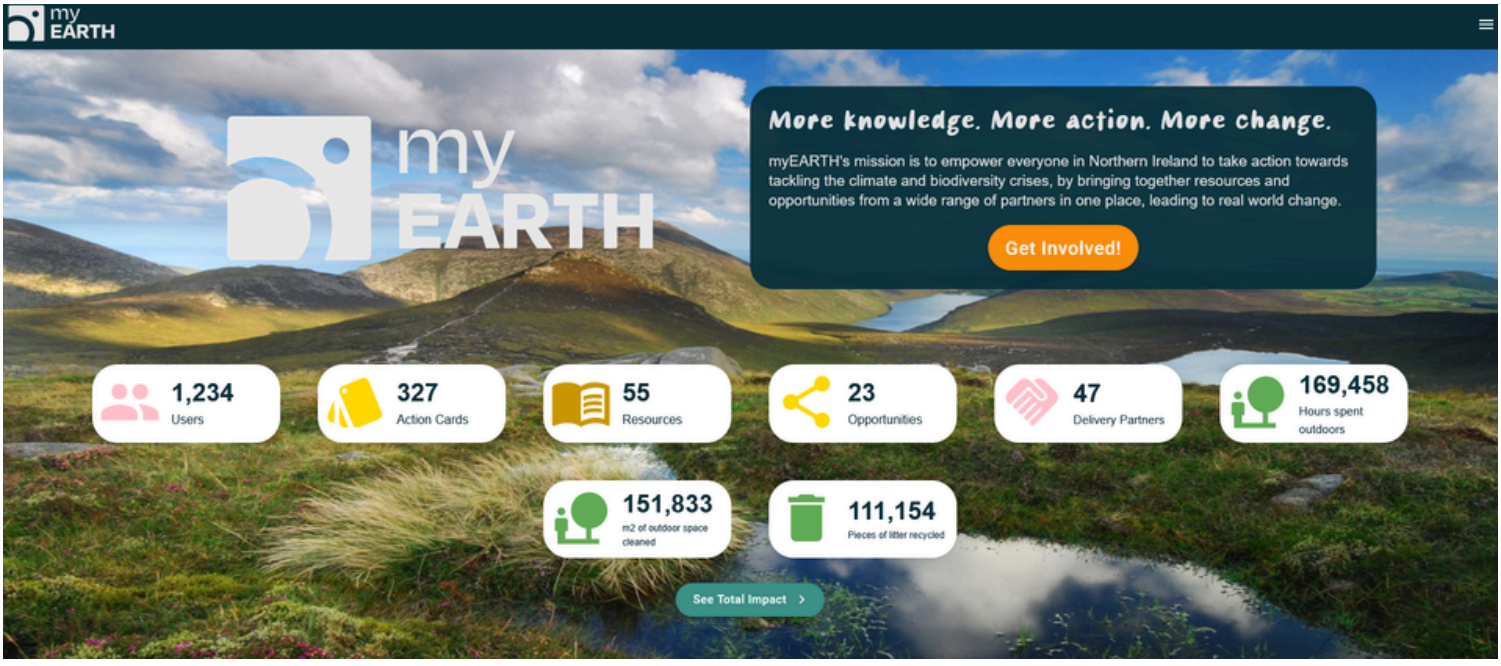
Northern Ireland Environment Link

ESDF x myEARTH

2026

Northern Ireland environment link



Shared by education for sustainable development forum

Introduction

The Education for Sustainable Development Forum (ESDF), part of Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL), takes a network role in supporting environmental education and ESD, including outdoor learning across Northern Ireland.

Through our extensive network of environmental NGOs, councils, academics, community groups, and educational practitioners, ESDF acts as a network for organisations working to equip young people, families, schools, and communities with the skills, knowledge, and motivation to care for the natural environment through lifelong learning and education.

ESDF partnered with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful in the development of myEARTH, a sector-wide digital hub designed to share resources, enable organisations to promote programmes, support Eco Schools delivery, and create a system for users to measure environmental impact in NI.

The myEARTH Evaluation (McCreanor Murray Rose, Jan 2026) highlights the essential role ESDF played in shaping, promoting, and supporting the platform during its development and initial launch period.

This case study outlines ESDF's contribution to myEARTH, exploring its role in consultation, network mobilisation, partner support, training, and early adoption, while also examining the opportunities that lie ahead.

myEARTH was developed to address the issues identified from the ESDF Strategy in 2021. The Strategy identified that environmental organisational content and opportunities were dispersed across numerous websites, creating barriers for users to easily engage with environmental action. The project sought to create a centralised website for resource, programme delivery, and introduce standardised measurement tools to show individual and shared impact across Northern Ireland.

As a network forum for environmental education organisations, ESDF was well positioned to support this project. The evaluation found that ESDF's networks and NIEL's established membership and supporters created communications channels and relationships that were essential to the project's success in consultation, resource development such as task cards and opportunities, and early user engagement.

ESDF's involvement supported the overarching aims and objectives of the myEARTH project, including:

- Enhance collaboration and connectedness across the sector by embedding stakeholder input, strengthening relationships, and supporting shared infrastructure.
- Streamline environmental offerings and reduce duplication through shared resources, consistent templates, and a unified access point for organisations and users.
- Equipping and upskilling by providing training on digital tools, and user website training.
- Establish a platform for measuring and reporting sector-wide impact by introducing standard metrics, dashboards, and a system for capturing and visualising environmental action.
- Attract new audiences to environmental action by broadening reach across councils, community groups, youth organisations, families, and businesses.

One of ESDF's greatest contributions was its role in mobilising the environmental education sector to shape the platform. ESDF have a wide range of stakeholders, including:

Environmental NGOs, Schools, nurseries, and youth groups, Local councils, Government departments, Universities, Community groups, Businesses, and Heritage organisations. This breadth of long standing trusted relationships encouraged engagement with the platform and myEARTH training and events.

The evaluation highlights the essential role ESDF played in maintaining consistent promotional activity through its and NIEL's Facebook pages, newsletters and websites to this audience. This work helped build awareness of the platform during development and launch, drawing from our established network and trusted organisational reputation. ESDF's ongoing engagement helped myEARTH reach teachers, families, and practitioners where they already engage.

ESDF played a key role during training sessions delivered across May 2025, which included support for our network in creating and uploading action cards. ESDF used the platform as both a delivery partner and end user; sourcing and booking trainers for Equipping and Upskilling, including photography, AI, Canva, and podcasting, from the ESDF network and managing bookings and attendees to all training sessions. These sessions were particularly well attended and valuable as user testing opportunities, helping identify usability challenges that informed future development and providing skills that could be utilised to create content for uploads onto myEARTH.

The external evaluation (Jan 2026) shows that 44 delivery partner organisations created a total of 251 action cards, covering all nine environmental themes. The majority of delivery partners are long standing members of NIEL or ESDF. It is positive to see that these networks helped ensure the platform was shaped by broad, representative sector input, through our established network and members.

Through established ESDF events myEARTH was highlighted to a wider audience, for example, through conferences and AGM's, the Belfast Learning Festival and NI Environment Week. The opportunities section of the myEARTH website has been directly fed from the NIEL website opportunities.

The independent evaluation concludes that ESDF played a critical and highly effective role in the development and early implementation of the myEARTH platform. ESDF's network mobilisation, consistent promotion, training support, and sector coordination contributed directly to the project's strongest achievements, including consultation reach, creation, and early uptake of environmental organisations.

With continued leadership, new staff and governance, a targeted focus on user experience and impact measurement, myEARTH continues to be the central website for Eco Schools NI and a freely available resource hub for users and organisations.

ESDF is well-positioned to continue to promote the website benefits to its network and contacts going forward through our yearly scheduled events, organisational reach and our continued comms and marketing.

You can find out more about myEARTH at www.myearth.org.uk or www.esdforum.org.uk

Acknowledgements

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