

PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Drone Innovation Partnership Project – Search and Rescue Demonstrator

Purpose of the Study. I am Tim McCarthy, a Professor in the National Centre for Geocomputation and Computer Science Department, Maynooth University.

I am the Principal Investigator of a collaborative research project, the Drone Innovation Partnership, funded by Research Ireland via the LERO Software Centre for Ireland (Grant 13/RC/2094_P2). The project, coordinated by Maynooth University in close collaboration and co-funded by Dublin City Council and Irish Aviation Authority, investigates how the Drone Ecosystem comprising drone regulation, technology, operations, services and applications can be rolled-out across cities and busy urban environments in a fair, accessible and transparent way.

Part of the project involves testing and demonstrating novel platforms (e.g. drones), technologies and sensors to improve activities routinely undertaken by Public Agencies and Local Authorities – such as Search and Rescue with the Dublin Fire Brigade, and Dangerous Building Inspections with Dublin City Council.

The Demonstrator exercise today (July 31st 2025) will involve Search and Rescue activities with the Dublin Fire Brigade's Swift River Rescue team at a pre-agreed location along the River Liffey.

During the exercise, involving project partners from Maynooth University, GeoAerospace, Dublin City Council and the Dublin Fire Brigade, free-flying drones will be flying, from a safe distance, recording video and imagery of our pre-planned Search and Rescue area. The GeoAerospace personnel operating and monitoring the drones are trying to locate a reported person in the River Liffey, information provided to them by the Dublin Fire Brigade. Their aim is to locate the person in distress as soon as possible and to report an accurate location back to the Swift River Rescue team who will enter the water in a rescue boat and travel to the person.

Throughout these drone flights it is possible that the drone imagery, video and thermal imagery will contain information from people involved in the exercise and members of the public. The research team in Maynooth University have undertaken a Data Protection Impact Assessment to assess all risks and mitigations relevant to the potential capture of your personal data (e.g. your face). We have implemented a set of techniques that minimize the chance of your face being captured in an identifiable way. These techniques include

- a) Using thermal imagery instead of RGB optical imagery
- b) Implementing a minimum flying height to ensure low resolution of imagery containing people (e.g. 40 metres above sea/ground level)
- c) Pre-planning flight trajectories to ensure the drone Field of View (FOW) avoids people on the ground and focuses on the River Liffey as much as possible

The drone data from today may be distributed to our project partners and collaborators, for example the Dublin Fire Brigade for the purposes of training and knowledge sharing. A Data Sharing and Processing Agreement will be signed between Maynooth University and any third party to ensure that

personal data is managed according to EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). No personally identifiable information will be included in scholarly publications that may result from the research. On completion of the research project, the drone data will be retained on a secure Maynooth University secure server for 24 months.

Any further queries? If you need any further information, you can contact me or the Project Data Protection Contact for the Project:

Tim McCarthy (Principal Investigator)

E: tim.mccarthy@mu.ie

Stephanie Keogh (Project Data Protection Contact for the Exercise)

E: stephanie.a.keogh@mu.ie

For your information the Data Controller for this research project is Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. The Data Protection office is located in Room 17/27, Rye Hall Extension, North Campus, Maynooth University, which can be contacted at dataprotection@mu.ie. Maynooth University Data Privacy policies can be found at <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/data-protection>.