



# The Role of Cemeteries in Environmental Sustainability and the Fight against Climate Change: Insights from Spain

**Nuria Capdevila**  
(CEO, Circle Corporation)

Date & Time: **6th June** (Fri.) 17:00-18:30

The Department of Death and Life Studies is pleased to announce a lecture by Ms. Nuria Capdevila from Spain, on recent developments in Spanish cemeteries with a focus on environmental sustainability.

As the founder and CEO of a pioneering company specializing in sustainable solutions, training, and reporting for the funeral sector, Ms. Capdevila is dedicated to creating environmentally sustainable cemeteries and is also widely recognized for her extensive research in this field. We hope you will join us

【LANGUAGE】English (no interpretation)

【HOW TO PARTICIPATE】

IN-PERSON: Room 214, Faculty of Law and Literature Building No.1, The University of Tokyo

ONLINE: Please join the Zoom meeting from <https://bit.ly/0606-DALS-lecture>

\* This event is part of both "Death & Life Studies and Practical Ethics Lecture Series" and "Sustainability and Humanities Seminar Series."

Host: Department of Death & Life Studies and Practical Ethics

Grant & Joint Host: International Humanities Project, Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology

Joint Host: Tokyo College

THE UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO

Contact: tomizawak@l.u-tokyo.ac.jp (Kana Tomizawa)

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## ABSTRACT

Cemeteries, traditionally conceived as mere places of eternal rest, are undergoing a paradigmatic transformation, establishing themselves as key spaces for environmental sustainability and active agents in the fight against climate change. This lecture will focus specifically on environmental aspects (excluding social and governance dimensions), while incorporating ethical reflections related to environmental responsibility and social commitment, which are essential elements for guiding truly sustainable practices.

The presentation is based on a comprehensive dossier prepared in 2024 for the AFCM (Association of Funeral Homes and Municipal Cemeteries), offering an in-depth analysis of innovative practices implemented by leading Spanish cemeteries. Their strategic alignment with global sustainability goals such as the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the principles of the Circular Economy will be highlighted.

The presentation will begin with a brief historical and cultural contextualization of cemeteries and funeral practices in Spain, emphasizing their evolution and the growing social awareness of their environmental impact. Concrete cases will be presented illustrating pioneering initiatives such as the adoption of renewable energy, biodiversity protection, efficient water management, responsible waste treatment, and the progressive electrification of vehicle fleets.

Furthermore, the concept of "neo-cemeteries" will be explored in depth, a term coined by our speaker, Nuria Capdevila, to define spaces that integrate ecological sustainability, digital innovation, and cultural inclusion. These future-oriented cemeteries not only aspire to environmental neutrality but also to generate a net positive impact, benefiting both ecosystems and community well-being.

Participants will gain an updated and forward-looking understanding of the role of cemeteries in Spain and how public policies and corporate strategies within the funeral sector actively contribute to sustainability. The lecture will conclude with reflections on future opportunities and challenges, highlighting the essential role of cemeteries as fundamental urban infrastructures (due to their land area and potential for hosting renewable energies) within the municipal strategy of cities—large, medium, or small—against climate change, adding environmental value to their undeniable historical, heritage, cultural, and memorial significance.