



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**Xiamen, PR China**

# **World's most liveable cities of 2013 are named at International Awards for Liveable Communities**

The world's most liveable cities of 2013 have been named at the annual International Awards for Liveable Communities (LivCom) hosted by Xiamen, PR China. The elite group of cities which fulfil the awards' range of key criteria covering environmental best practice, the healthy lifestyle of citizens and community involvement as well as arts and cultural heritage, numbers five in all. These run from the smallest, the island of Inis Oirr (Ireland) with just 252 people, to one of the largest, Seo-gu, Daejeon Metropolitan City (South Korea) which at 506,000 people, scooped the top prize in the category for cities over 400,000.

Seo-gu, which also won the best practice award for its enhancement of the built and natural landscape, was described by judges as a beautiful city.

Judge Torgeir Sorensen told guests at the awards night: "The design of Seo-gu has enhancement of the landscape at its heart. Restored waterways, forests, walkways and trails are readily accessible to both residents and visitors, of all abilities. Infrastructure development is environmentally friendly and the result is a beautiful city."

LivCom Head Judge Rob Small presented was he described as the “delightful island community” of Inis Oirr with a further award for its best practice in promoting and sustaining healthy lifestyles saying: “One of the challenges of isolated communities like Inis Oirr is to ensure that they stay connected to the world. But there is a pride generated in such communities which can also contribute to good health in itself. This community showed leading edge approaches across all LivCom criteria.”

Delivering a powerful presentation, Utena in Lithuania won the hearts of judges who named it ‘most liveable city’ in the population category 20,000-75,000. The industrial city has undergone a transformation in recent years with the development of large parks, squares, recreation and tourism.

Judge Steve Palframan said: “The team from Utena fully understood what the judges were looking for. This was a very good all round presentation which showcased some examples of best practice in each category.”

Bruges in Belgium, found favour with judges to win the 75,000-150,000 population category. LivCom’s judges highlighted the city’s success in fostering community participation and empowerment. Judge Yoritake Toshiro said: “This community demonstrated a very comprehensive, structured approach to its community involvement and the planning and subsequent monitoring of the development of their own local environment. Their use of advisory councils, public consultation meetings, telephone and email hotlines and general publicity for residents is very advanced, clear, appropriate and detailed.”

Kuantan, the state capital of Pahang, Malaysia, proved unstoppable in the 150,000-400,000 category. Judge Rob Small said: “Kuantan’s was a stand-out presentation showing great strengths across all the LivCom criteria. This community’s particular strength is in responding to the climate change challenge. It has also achieved much in respect of fostering its beautiful natural bio-diversity. We saw just why it is a multi-award winner in many competitions notably in the environment, social inclusion and community involvement.”

After three intensive days evaluating more than 60 finalists from around 30 countries, Mr Small said standards being achieved by communities around the world were higher than ever.

“This year’s competition produced some interesting insights into how the world is responding to emerging and contemporary trends. The increasing frequency and severity of adverse weather events and natural disasters has resulted in increasing the awareness of the impacts of climate change.

“In particular several communities mentioned their concern about both adaptation to and mitigation of climate change while emergency response planning is more commonly viewed as an essential element.

“There is also increasingly a focus on the resilience of communities and their ability to adapt and change. The trend towards global migration means that populations need to be more and more inclusive in accepting new cultures.

“Ironically, the increasing longevity of populations has produced a range of social challenges and increasing incidence of dementia, depression and even loneliness generated in this aged group is evident in almost every culture. Reconnecting with our senior citizens is an issue being tackled all over the world.”

This week’s event in Xiamen attracted visitors from around the world as well as the participation of around several thousand local people from visitors to volunteers. Delegates poured in to the south east coastal garden city in Fujian to watch the cities compete, to see the global exhibition and attend a LivCom seminar in association with UNEP dedicated to local sustainability and environment management issues.

Alan Smith, chief executive and founder of LivCom said: “We have had a very warm welcome from the people and city of Xiamen which has provided a beautiful backdrop to LivCom 2013. As previous winners of a LivCom award, this city has already shown its commitment to the ideals of international liveable city status and the interest shown by

local visitors to the LivCom presentations, exhibition and seminar demonstrates that this commitment has been sustained.

“This was our 17<sup>th</sup> year and participation in LivCom by new countries and cities, particularly across this region, suggests we continue to fulfil a need to share best practice and to provide a springboard for new ideas.

“We have long championed the fact that many of the world’s most pressing challenges can be met by working at regional level – the cities here demonstrated that they are actively taking a lead in this – and winning.”

The LivCom awards annually bring together some of the world’s leading innovators in the field.

The finalists are divided into five categories according to their average daytime population. In addition there are winners in categories covering specific projects as well as a £10,000 bursary awarded to one community project each year.

The winning project schemes for 2013 impressing judges included a pioneering eco-village, the regeneration of urban greenbelt and a heritage town restoration project.

A education project in Pasig City in the Philippines, ‘Environmental Security for Pre-Schools’ aimed at giving children in 43 schools weekly ‘greenheart days’ collected the £10,000 bursary award made each year at the Livcom finals. The match-funded award will be used to support the education programme giving children the chance to take part in weekly green heart days with activities ranging from recycling to urban gardening to fishpond management.

## About LivCom

The LivCom Awards were launched internationally in 1997 and are endorsed by the United Nations Environment Programme and the scheme is run as a UK Registered Charity.

LivCom Awards are made in three categories covering Whole City, Sustainable Projects and a Bursary Award which sees match funding of £10,000 go to the winning project.

A new country has been represented at the LivCom Awards in each of the past 17 years, and now more 50 countries are regularly represented.

The International Awards for Liveable Communities 2013 were held at the Royal Victoria Hotel, Xiamen, PR China 28 November-2 December 2013.

## Results – LivCom 2013, Xiamen, China

### Category A

1 <sup>st</sup>	Inis Oirr	Gold
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Agueda	Silver
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Learmont Community Development Group	Silver
	Julianstown	Silver
	Birdhill	Silver
	Fuxing	Bronze
	Zhuzihu	Bronze
	Lonshan	Bronze
	Guan-Fu	Bronze
	E – Wang Community	Bronze
	Jiantan	Bronze
	Tugou	Bronze

### Category B

1 <sup>st</sup>	Utena City	Gold
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2 <sup>nd</sup>	Community of Szentos Town	Silver
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Municipality of Kaposvar	Silver
	City of Coral Gables	Silver
	Jihlava	Silver
	Cyberjaya	Bronze
	Dashu District, Kaohsiung City	Bronze
	Goseong-gun	Bronze
	Jiaoxi Township	Bronze
	Grand Xi-Chuan Community, Taichung City	Bronze
	Wanli District, New Taipei City	Bronze

#### **Category C**

1 <sup>st</sup>	Bruges	Gold
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Daya District, Taichung City	Bronze
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Royal Commission of Yanbu	Bronze
	Gushan District	Bronze
	Sanxia District, New Taipei City	Bronze

#### **Category D**

1 <sup>st</sup>	Kuantan	Silver
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Hualien County	Bronze
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Muharraq Town	Bronze
	East District, Tainan City	Bronze
	Tamsui District, New Taipei City	Bronze

## Category E

1 <sup>st</sup>	Seo-gu, Daejeon Metropolitan City	Gold
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Pasig City	Gold
3 <sup>rd</sup>	New Taipei City	Silver
	Suwon City	Silver
	Miaoli	Bronze

## Projects

### Built

1 <sup>st</sup>	Yilan Old Town Bundle Inset Movement	Gold
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Kaohsiung Exhibition and Convention Centre	Gold
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Tainan Astronomical	

### Natural

1 <sup>st</sup>	Grand Xi-Chuan Village - Calligraphy Greenway: The Regeneration of Urban Green Belt
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Suwon City – Environmental Best Practice: The Restoration of Suwon Stream
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Koahsiung City – City Face Off: Kaohsiung Harbor Railroad Historical Park

### Socio –Economic

1 <sup>st</sup>	Cloughjordan Eco Village	Gold
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Schwalm-Eder-Kreis - Tecknikhaus Energy Plus	Gold
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Gauteng, Johannesburg - Gauteng Carnival	Gold

### Criteria Awards

Enhancement of the Built and Natural Landscape	Seo-gu, Daejeon Metropolitan City
Arts, Culture and Heritage	E-Wang Community, Yilan County
Environmental Best Practice	Agueda

Community Participation

Bruges

Healthy Lifestyle

Inis Oirr

Strategic Planning

City of Pasig

**Bursary Award** Pasig City – Environmental Security for Pre-Schools