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Sustainable micro-community, urban greenbelt regeneration, and heritage town projects scoop awards at LivCom 2013 ‘Green Oscars’

A diverse range of projects have proved winners at the 2013 International Awards for Liveable Communities (LivCom) held in Xiamen, PR China.

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

Both Cloughjordan, Ireland’s only eco-village and Yilan County’s civic regeneration project in Chinese Taipei, won gold awards for the scope of their innovation and the quality of their approach which the judges said made them all world-leaders in their field.

The Cloughjordan community project in Co Tipperary which covers 67-acres and has planning permission for 132 homes, was described as “an innovative development of a sustainable neighbourhood that is trying to show best practice in every aspect of daily sustainable life”.

In Grand Xi-Xhuan, Chinese Taipei, judges highlighted the sympathetic creation of an urban greenway that connects various sectors of the city to create a corridor of city life and create synergy between the public and private sectors, linking the old and new city.

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.

Judges said: “This project recognises that children have an important role to play in the development of clean, green, liveable cities. Habits learned at a young age will stay with children and benefit their community throughout their lives.”

Other gold award-winning projects included an eco-tech training centre in Schwalm-Eder-Kreis, Germany, the development of the Gauteng Carnival in Johannesburg, South Africa which brings together 21,000 people in a project that has promoted reconciliation and an iconic waterfront exhibition centre in Kaohsiung, Chinese Taipei.

Lead project judge Gabriel de Buyssher said: “The judges reviewed built, natural and socio-economic projects. Projects addressed a wide range of issues to meet both the needs of a modern and developing society such as urban growth but also the demands arising from climate change such as disaster recovery systems.”

Co-judge in the socio-economic category Dirk Schnurr added: “In the socio-economic category we saw a very high standard of project with outcomes having a direct impact and each affecting the day to day life of a broad demographic.”

Fellow judge Evelyn Alemanni added: “We've seen a wide variety of types of projects and applaud the passion and ingenuity of the presenters and their city's efforts to create more liveable communities.”

Natural project co-judge Jos De Wael added: “It appears that a lot of the projects have benefitted from LivCom presentations of previous years, and as always, the bar is being raised. The judges of the natural projects noticed a lot of attention is paid to the liveability of the communities.”

What the project judges said:

Socio economic projects:

First place, Cloughjordan Eco Village (Gold)

“This small Irish community is truly pioneering a collective approach to making villages, towns and city neighbourhoods more sustainable and resilient to adversity as well as being a great place to live.”

Second place, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis, Technikhaus Energy Plus (Gold)

“This is pioneering demonstration project for implementing and studying eco-technologies and providing training for builders.”

Third place, Gauteng, Johannesburg, Gauteng Carnival (Gold)

“A great project that has expanded the simple idea of a parade into a year round programme involving whole communities, training individuals and creating new opportunities, pride and cohesion.”

Natural projects

First place, Grand Xi-Chuan Village - Calligraphy Greenway: The Regeneration of Urban Green Belt

“This project involves the sensitive creation of an urban greenway that connects various sectors of the city to create a corridor of city life and create synergy between the public and private sectors, linking the old and new city. Special emphasis is placed on trees and green elements, and maintenance is handled in part by people from affected neighbourhoods.”

Second place, Suwon City – Environmental Best Practice: The Restoration of Suwon Stream

“Removing the concrete covering over the Suwon Stream has facilitated the return of the natural stream to citizens and provides economic and environmental benefits.”

Third place, Kaohsiung City – City Face Off: Kaohsiung Harbour Railroad Historical Park

“Kaohsiung Harbour Railroad Historical Park is a transformation of an abandoned railroad yard into a green space that enhances the community and honours the heritage of the railroad.”

Built projects

First place, Yilan Old Town Bundle Inset Movement, Yilan County (Gold)

“This project has organically explored the full range of possibilities in bringing the collective memory of the old town back into daily life. This has also been carried out at the same time as enhancing the existing typhoon control system so that integrates with daily life.”

Second place, Kaohsiung Exhibition and Convention Centre (Gold)

“This is an outstanding new architectural icon for the city built on the waterfront that has been given back to the public.”

Third place, Tainan Astronomical Education Area

“This is a great opportunity for the education of students and residents interested in this area. It is integrated within the schooling system as well as in the museum network of the wider region.”

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.