

PRESS RELEASE

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Revival of ancient heritage site, a World Games legacy scheme and project to ‘make food go further’ win plaudits at UNEP-backed global awards

A diverse range of projects won awards at this year’s International Awards for Liveable Communities (Livcom) held in Songpa, South Korea at the weekend. The winning schemes included work to restore and protect the historic quarter of Dubai city in the UAE, the building and legacy management of the environmentally sustainable 2009 World Games sports stadium at Kaohsiung, Taiwan and a pastoral project aimed at getting residents ‘back to nature’ in the city of Seogwipo, South Korea. All 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.

A project in the Philippines to literally ‘make food go further’ went to the heart of what Livcom judges pinpointed as one of the key challenges for regional and local government in the week that the number of people on the planet hit seven billion – population growth.

This project in Paranaque City addresses the issues of hunger and malnutrition among families and children by giving people the tools and training, supplies such as seed, plants, soil improvement material, tools and promotion material to grow and sell their own nutritious, organic food. By growing their own food, families realize savings to buy other food needs they can’t produce. This integrated community approach to addressing the needs of malnourished children collected the £10,000 bursary award made each year at the Livcom finals. The award will be used to extend the “Making Food Go Further: Hunger Mitigation” scheme.

Other award-winning projects included a “cutting-edge” park improvement scheme in Nieuwpoort, Belgium, and an eco-tourism project in Nansha, China.

On a smaller scale, a church and monastery garden restoration project at Chrudim in the Czech Republic, won a gold award for its demonstration of best practice.

The team from Dubai described how the challenges to conserve the heritage of Dubai have been “great”.

“The rapid urban development and modernization that has taken place in the city of Dubai in the past few decades have negatively influenced the physical urban fabric of the historic area. The people of the UAE have experienced dramatic change in the few short years since the state was established, change that has provided them with all the benefits of a modern, developed society, but at the same time, this change have distant them from their local and traditional environment. As a result, most of the historic buildings were abandoned and crumbled. These challenges have been one of the main concerns of Dubai Municipality; to revive the historical and cultural significance of Dubai though initiating a long term project to revitalise the historic centre of Dubai.

“The main aim of the project is to revitalize the life line and the heart of Dubai historic centre, to generate a sense of pride in the city and to create a unique sense of place.”

Lead project judge Gus Stahlman (Canada) said: “The plan for revitalisation of historic Dubai integrates world-class planning, strategic processes and craftsmanship to revitalise and repair the city’s historic areas.

“The municipality works co-operatively and collaboratively not just with local property owners but cities worldwide to share expertise and knowledge.”

Livcom head judge Rob Small (New Zealand) said that this year’s LivCom Awards had shown up new approaches and trends being seen across the globe.

“More communities are becoming more multi-cultural in nature. Successful communities assimilate these cultural and ethnic groups while at the same time as valuing the cultures that they bring. This is a move away from attempts in the past to get new groups to just “fit in”.

“Equally, an emphasis on the sense of place and a sense of pride among communities was also in evidence.”

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What the judges said:

Socio economic projects:

First place (Gold), Dubai City historic restoration, Dubai, UAE

“The plan for revitalisation of historic Dubai integrates world-class planning, strategic processes and craftsmanship to revitalise and repair the city’s historic areas.

“The municipality works co-operatively and collaboratively not just with local property owners but cities worldwide to share expertise and knowledge.”

Second place, Serpentine Jarradale Shire, Western Australia

“The strategic plan for Serpentine Jarradale is illustrative of its comprehensive approach to the region’s development. This plan was created as a response to the expected increase in population and while taking the future needs of inhabitants into consideration, it is strongly focussed on nature preservation and sustainable agriculture.”

Third place, City of Batangas E Code project, Philippines

“This project showed the way from planning a sustainable, green city to becoming one. It is also an example of how to initiate programmes and encourage the participation of inhabitants. By doing this the City of Batangas has reached many of its goals in a very short space of time.”

Natural projects

First place (gold) Seogwipo, “Jeju Olle” , South Korea

“This project reminded us of the need to stop, reflect and make the connection to nature that has been lost. It drew on the idea that walking, exploring and learning would make participants better people both physically and mentally. This winning team really listened to the call of their Natural surroundings and has chosen Nature as their guide.”

Second place (gold) Nieuwpoort, Belgium – King Leopold II Park Renovation (Gold)

“This Natural project has class, style and a new age edge that has already been recognized as a benchmark for future public parks. The continued success of this project lies in the future interaction with local people that will build both a sense of pride and continue the work of preservation.”

Third place (Silver):

Nansha Wetlands

“This is a natural project that entails an holistic approach to eco-tourism. With the ever increasing popularity of discovering nature, this project offers food for thought in regards to nature sustainability.

“The scope of protection of this project included green maintenance, water quality protection and clean energy applications. It is a project that can help others to learn the complexities of reclaiming once derelict marshland.”

Built projects

First place (Gold) World Games Stadium, Kaohsiung, Taiwan

“This building was designed with thought and care for the people and for the landscape around it. It is a fine example of using environmentally sensitive technologies such as solar panels, correctly. The special construction of the roof, storm water management systems and eco-park around the stadium make the building efficient, sustainable and attractive.”

Second place (Gold) Reconstruction of St Joseph’s Church and monastery gardens, Cherubim, Czech Republic

“This project represents a respectful attitude to heritage protection. The sensitive reconstruction of the monastery and new museum of baroque sculpture are fine examples of best practice. The project included saving rare and endangered old fruit trees and restoring the flower meadows. Today, the result is an attractive spot for culture and leisure for the people of Chrudim.”

Third place (Gold), Longyand Museum, Yilan, China

“The concept of an exhibition showcasing the history of Yilan, the value of nature and the necessity of protecting the landscape is a good one. This is a strong example of a sustainable approach.”

Project and Bursary Award results:

Bursary Award of £10,000: Paranaque City, Philippines – “Making food go further – hunger mitigation”

Socio Economic:

1. Dubai – revitalization of historic Dubai (Gold)
2. Serpentine Jarradale Shire – Planning for the future (Gold)
3. Batangas City – City E Code (Gold)

Built

1. Kaohsiung, Taiwan – the World Games Main Stadium (Gold)
2. Chrudim, Czech Republic – reconstruction of St Joseph Church and Monastery gardens (Gold)

3. Yilan, Taiwan – Lanyang Museum – Window of Yilan (Gold)

Natural

1. Seogwipo City – Jeju Olle Project (Gold)
2. Nieuwpoort, Belgium – King Leopold II Park Renovation (Gold)
3. Nansha District - Guangzhou, Nansha Wetlands (Silver)

Special Project Award: Iloilo City – post LivCom, Advancing the Iloilo River Development Initiatives for Integrated Sustainable 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 eleven years, and now more 50 countries are regularly represented.

The International Awards for Liveable Communities 2011 were held at the Lotte World Hotel, Songpa-Gu, Seoul, South Korea.