

PRESS RELEASE

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Delegates arrive in Songpa, South Korea for global environmental awards finals

The city of Songpa, South Korea, will be hosting the final of the 15th year of the International Awards for Liveable Communities this weekend (28th-31st October).

Delegates from around the world have gathered today in Songpa for the finals and begin making their case for the achievements of their communities tomorrow (Friday).

In the contest for towns and cities, a total of sixty delegations qualified for the final in Songpa – the largest ever - after the first round of judging.

Those qualifying for the finals included cities from Europe, Spain, Belgium, Moldova, Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Italy, Finland, France, Poland and Turkey, from Asia, China, South Korea, Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Jordan and the UAE, from Australasia, Australia, from the Americas, the USA and Brazil, and from Africa, Mozambique and South Africa.

Thirteen towns and cities from the host nation South Korea have reached the finals in the towns and cities category.

Songpa is the first city in South Korea to host the prestigious LivCom International Awards – which is devoted to championing and rewarding sustainable development, quality of life and environmental best practice in communities.

At the awards finals, which have been held every year since 1997, judges evaluate the approach to individual criteria for sustainable development – enhancement of the landscape, heritage management, environmentally-sensitive practices, community sustainability and planning for the future.

The finals, which see representatives of the various towns and cities make their case to an international jury, last for five days, culminating in an awards ceremony on the closing evening (Monday 31st October) when the results including the name of the most liveable city in the world for 2011 in each population category will be announced.

Events from the final will be broadcast on the internet in real time www.livcomawards.com so it will be possible to follow the teams taking part from anywhere in the world. The competition will be accompanied by an exhibition and a UN Seminar.

Opening the competition, Mayor of Songpa Park Choon Hee said: “Songpa declared early on its intention to become an environmentally friendly city and the hosting of the 2011 Livcom Awards is an extension of such a commitment. Through the event local residents will be participating more actively in addressing the local environmental issues so the Livcom delegates will find on their visit to Songpa a lot of supporters.”

Head judge Rob Small said: “The governance of cities and communities must be one of the world’s most complex activities. There are no guide books. Developing liveable communities is an even greater challenge.

“The world’s population is tipped to reach 7 billion at the end of this month - the challenge of this growth must be something we all think about in all aspects of liveability.

“Finally on behalf of the judges good luck and thank you for the privilege of letting us hear your stories.

“The best messages come from the heart so please ensure that you tell us the whole story because other communities from around the world will be listening. The most valuable thing that you can take home is what you learn from others – new concepts to test and apply to your own communities.”