

PRESS RELEASE

The 11th European Greenways Awards have been given on November 20 2023 during the official ceremony in Rome (Italy)



Nine greenways from Ireland, Italy, Poland, Germany, Spain, Serbia, Czechia, and Latvia, have been awarded as reference of best practices in Europe. The Award ceremony was held in Rome (Italy)

The European Greenways Award was created in 2003 and has been held every two years since. The objective is to promote examples of best practices and to support their replication for other greenways all over Europe. The European Greenways Award is granted only to greenways under the [Lille Declaration](#), as well as to initiatives already in existence.

EGWA has been delighted to receive 32 candidacies from 13 countries, the highest number of candidacies received so far and we warmly thank all participants for responding to the call.

In this 2023 edition the [international jury](#) meet 12 July 2023, has awarded projects in three categories: "Excellence", "Exemplary Initiatives" and one special award on "Green transition in Greenways". This special award is part of the activities promoted by EGWA in the co-implementation of the Transition Pathway for Tourism, to recognise initiatives addressing green transition challenges in the greenways ecosystem, and to showcase how the green transition happens on the ground.

We are pleased to announce that the award winners are:

A. EXCELLENCE category

1st Prize: Royal Canal Greenway. Presented by Waterways Ireland.

For the realisation of a very ambitious project to valorise as a greenway a 130 km long historical canal, with high heritage value, which shows in its integrity a high quality and a great support from stakeholders.

It has an outstanding promotion and product development; the monitoring provides extraordinary results of its actual use by locals and visitors and a great economic impact.

2nd Prize: Via Verde della Costa dei Trabocchi – Greenway of the Trabocchi Coast, Italy. Presented by Abruzzo Region.

For the impressive transformation of a disused railway line into a 42 km high-quality greenway, integrated into the stunning landscape of the Teatine coast, resulting in a spectacular greenway.

It is an extraordinary example of environmental recovery, which has required a long process. It represents a major transformation and enhancement of the Costa dei Trabocchi territory, integrating also sustainable mobility models.

3rd Prize. The European Bridge and a cross-border Polish-German greenway. Presented by Województwo Zachodniopomorskie (West Pomeranian Voivodeship) / Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Zachodniopomorskiego (Marshal's Office of the Westpomeranian Voivodeship)/ Poland

For the cross-border rail-trail greenway, which includes as a key element the restoration of the historic railway bridge, over which a 660 m observation platform has been created, with an important environmental component, and which offers unique views of the river and its natural floodplains.

It is the result of cross-border cooperation, a symbol of reconciliation between the two countries, which stimulates local pedestrian and cyclist traffic, and has become an important tourist destination.

B. EXEMPLARY INITIATIVES category

1st Prize: Wuppertalbewegung, Germany, presented by Wuppertalbewegung e.V.

For the conversion of the abandoned inner-city railway line “Schwarzbachtrasse” in Wuppertal into a high-quality cycling, walking and inline skating greenway by a citizens’ initiative, taking full charge of all activities from planning, acquiring necessary funds to building, and operating the track.

The 1.8 km long greenway is key to daily active mobility, and also connects to other rail-trail greenways, allowing residents to go on longer cycle tours

2nd Prize: Greenway from The Danube to the Adriatic, Serbia, presented by YUGO cycling campaign

For the campaign of more than 7 years to promote a greenway along the abandoned narrow railway line from Belgrade to the Adriatic, in a continuous route, of 1000 km, with the same concept and communication, through 4 Balkans countries.

Jury values the long-term vision, and the different sections carried out to date, and encourages to continue joining efforts to attract new key actors to support the implementation of the route, strengthening and opening new opportunities for cooperation in these territories.

“Ex aequo”

3rd Prize. Cross-border Bicycle Festival on Iron Greenway in Poland and Czechia. Presented by Poland/ Czechia

For the organisation of an extraordinary 2-day cross-border festival for cyclists and other users, to reinforce the promotion and creation of a tourism product of the Iron Greenway, a safe and scenic 52 km loop greenway of railway origin.

Organised in Polish-Czech partnership, with a broad representation of stakeholders, festival has included a variety of unique attractions along the route, and activities involving tourism industry, achieving a great notoriety.

3rd Prize. Explore the greenways with Huskies in Latvia! Latvia, presented by Vidzeme Tourism Association in cooperation with Dodkepu.

For the original, and socially inclusive activity, which demonstrates that greenways can also be used for a truly unique experience with the friendly huskies, hiking all year round, and sledging in winter.

Suitable for visitors of all ages, including people with disabilities as well as learning difficulties, it offers entertainment and the possibilities to explore the greenway in an innovative and value-adding way.

Special Jury award

30 years of the Spanish Greenways Programme Spain, Presented by Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles (Spanish Railways Foundation)

In recognition of the success of the 30 years of the Spanish National Greenways Programme, and its consistent and continued effort to promote the rehabilitation of disused railway heritage as greenways.

The programme has been gaining weight and facing new challenges over time; by federating efforts, weaving strong institutional cooperation, and involving citizen participation, it constitutes a model of governance, and contributes to sustainable tourism. It has great visibility and recognition, and is a national and international reference.

C. Special award, Green transition in greenways

Plan for the Green Transition on the Sierra Greenway. Spain, presented by Fundación Vía Verde de la Sierra

For the implementation of a comprehensive strategy that includes maintenance and management with sustainable techniques. It is based on the non-use of phytosanitary products, and maintenance of the edges of the greenway based on sheep and goat grazing and complementary mechanical means; reforestation with native plants; installation of renewable energy systems in all the buildings and facilities of the greenway, and systems to reduce consumption; and awareness campaigns to act against climate change with daily actions.

Jury mention:

The jury decided to give a special mention to the two following candidacies in the Green Transition category:

Pierrefonds greenway France. Presented by : Communauté de Commune des Lisières de l'Oise (CCLO) & Colas France

The jury highly appreciated the innovative construction system of the greenway to reduce the carbon footprint, and the use of such technology

in territories with a valuable natural and cultural heritage, that permit furthermore a high integration in the landscape.

It would like to know its response to the full life cycle, which its recent implementation does not allow to evaluate, and therefore to have more information regarding its maintenance over time.

The applicant is strongly encouraged to apply for the next edition.

Jaen Greenways as Green Infrastructure; Spain; Diputación Provincial de Jaen

The jury highly valued the work carried out in the ambitious reforestation plan, taking into account the extreme climatic conditions of the summer, with very high temperatures and sunshine, and the lack of water, and the use of innovative techniques to make the best use of water.

It would be interested to know more about the results of these new and promising water use techniques (biochar, and deep irrigation), and the monitoring techniques, of which applicant can hardly provide results currently given their recent use.

The applicant is strongly encouraged to apply at the next edition.

The 11th European Greenways Award 2023 has been organized by the [European Greenways Association](#) in cooperation with [Rete Ferroviaria Italiana](#) and the [Associazione Italiana Greenways](#), with the patronage of the [Comune di Roma](#).

EGWA sincerely thanks the co-organisers in Italy, the members of the Jury, and all participants for responding to the call, as well as the participants at the Award gala in Rome, and the members of EGWA, for making this Award possible. The next edition will be held in 2025.

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