

Lousada wins 2019 Transformative Action Award



The Portuguese city was awarded the title for using environmental education to reconnect local residents with their rural landscape, while promoting environmental practices

Lousada was announced today as the winner of the [2019 Transformative Action Award](#) at a ceremony held at the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) in Brussels. Its initiative 'Integrated education for sustainability' was selected by a jury of experts for its potential to bring about the socio-cultural, socio-economic and technological transformation of its community. The European sustainability award is organised by ICLEI, the Basque Country and the City of Aalborg (Denmark) and supported by the CoR and the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Lousada is a densely populated municipality in rural Portugal. However, despite its rural setting, there is in general a low appreciation for the importance of nature among residents. The City is facing numerous environmental problems, such as water pollution, forest fires, invasive plant species, habitat and landscape degradation, and biodiversity loss.

Since 2017, the municipality has used a sustainability strategy structured on several axis – research; environmental education; social engagement; and infrastructure. The aim was – to promote environmental practices, inspire and support alternative ways of creating conservation areas and job opportunities, and reconnect local citizens with the rural landscape.

Some of the results achieved include the planting of 40,000 native trees with the support of over 4,500 volunteers; the restoration of over 20 hectares of degraded land; the creation of more than 20 wildlife ponds; and an increase in waste recycling by over 500 tonnes per year.

“ Natural and social capital are the true and only assurance for our common future. We must act together, fight together, educate together and create our future together, for us and the generations to come, ” said **Manuel Nunes, City Councillor for Environment and Nature, Municipality of Lousada .**

“Congratulations to the Municipality of Lousada!” said **Cor Lamers, ENVE Commission Chair and jury member** during the award ceremony. *“Your inspiring transformative action illustrates the powerful role environmental education plays in promoting environmental practices, supporting the creation of conservation areas and environmental job opportunities, as well as reconnecting local citizens with their rural landscape .”*

Alongside receiving a trophy and the title of “Transformative Action of the Year 2019”, Lousada also received €10,000 to help kick-start further transformative actions in their city.

“ I am deeply impressed by the work carried out by the City of Lousada and eagerly look forward to seeing how their sustainability strategy and plans develop over the coming years. I hope this prize money helps catalyze further action and I look forward to seeing those results ,” said **Wolfgang Teubner, Jury Member and Regional Director, ICLEI Europe.**

During the award ceremony, a new [guidance document](#) for towns and cities seeking to localise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was launched. The document, which was written by ICLEI with the support of the City of Aalborg, and the Basque Country, provides towns and cities with 15 inspiring and replicable examples of how the pathways of the Basque Declaration can be used to localise the SDGs.

“The need for transformation towards sustainability has never been as urgent. We need a technological, socio-economic and socio-cultural transformation of our societies in order to limit catastrophic environmental consequences and ensure a decent quality of life for all. This publication shows the ability and potential of the local level to act, whilst contributing to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals on a global level,” said **Mr. Teubner.**

For more information about Lousada’s winning transformative action, click [here](#) .

Background:

[ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability](#) is a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 100+ countries, we influence sustainability policy and drive local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. Our Members and team of experts work together through peer exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systemic change for urban sustainability.

The [European Sustainable Cities Platform](#) was launched in 2016, following the [8th European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns in the Basque Country](#) . Supported by the City of Aalborg, Denmark; the Basque Country, and ICLEI Europe, it focuses on the uptake of the [Basque Declaration](#) , which is the main outcome of the 8th European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns. The [9th European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns](#) will take place from 30 September – 2 October 2020 in Mannheim (Germany).

The [Basque Declaration](#) outlines new pathways for European Cities and Towns to create productive, sustainable and resilient cities for a liveable and inclusive Europe. The document aims to support and accelerate socio-cultural, socio-economic and technological transformation.

The Basque Declaration is the next step for local sustainability following the [Aalborg Charter](#) (1994), which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, and the [Aalborg Commitments](#) (2004). The Basque Declaration highlights the need for ambitious local leaders to think outside the box and find innovative ways to engage with civil society in order to meet economic, environmental

and social challenges and at the same time marks the importance of finding sustainable solutions that increase economic value for the benefit of the local population.

Image(s):

Here are a selection of downloadable images related to Lousada's transformative Action

[\[1\] Group photo](#) © Municipality of Lousada, Portugal

[\[2\] Planting trees](#) © Municipality of Lousada, Portugal

[\[3\] Nature walk](#) © Municipality of Lousada, Portugal

[\[4\] Cleaning the river](#) © Municipality of Lousada, Portugal

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