Expert Panel

Technical Assessment Synopsis Report

European Green Leaf Award 2024

Elsinore (Denmark)

October 2022

Colophon

Contents

Figures

Tables

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The European Green Leaf Award (EGLA) has been awarded by the European Commission since 2014. The objectives of the EGLA are to:

- Recognize towns and cities that demonstrate a good environmental record and commitment to generating green growth.
- Encourage towns and cities to actively develop citizens' environmental awareness and involvement.
- Identify towns and cities able to act as a 'green ambassador' and to encourage other towns and cities to progress towards better sustainability outcomes.

The EGLA 2024 competition cycle was launched on 16 December 2021. The deadline for applications was 28 April 2022. As in previous years, the Expert Panel has carried out a technical assessment of each of the 6 environmental topic areas (detailed in Section 2.3) and provided a ranking of applicant cities together with qualitative comments on each application. Guided by the Expert Panel's recommendations, a shortlist of cities was established by the Commission and subsequently submitted to the Jury.

Considering the Expert Panel's proposals and information presented to the Jury, the Jury will take the final decision in selecting the city or cities to be awarded the title of European Green Leaf 2024. The winner(s) will be announced at the EGLA Awards Ceremony on 27 October 2022 in Grenoble, the 2022 European Green Capital. Details on the competition process were set out in the published Rules of Contest[1] for this competition cycle.

1.2 Aim of this Report

This Technical Assessment Report provides a summary of the technical evaluation of the Expert Panel, and is the basis for shortlisting the finalist cities.

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[1] EGCA-EGLA 2024 Rules of Contest FINAL_REVAFL (europa.eu)

2. Technical Assessment Procedure

2.1 Applicant Cities for EGLA 2024

A total of 12 cities applied for the EGLA 2024 competition. Of these, 10 cities submitted valid applications. Details of the 2024 applicants are included in Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1.

Table Error! No text of specified style in document.**1 -- Details of Applicant Cities (presented in alphabetical order)**

No.	City Name	Country	Population	CoM[2] signatory	GCA[3] signatory	Part of 100 Cities Mission[4]
1	Alytus	Lithuania	49,000			
2	Aulnay-sous-Bois	France	86,500			
3	Bistriţa	Romania	94,000	x	x	
4	Elsinore	Denmark	63,000	x		
5	Errenteria	Spain	40,000	x		
6	Garges-lès-Gonesse	France	43,000			
7	Sisak	Croatia	47,500	x		
8	Grevena	Greece	26,000			
9	Treviso	Italy	85,000	x		
10	Velenje	Slovenia	33,500	x		x

Figure Error! No text of specified style in document.**.1 - Map of European Green Leaf 2024 Applicant Cities**

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[2] Covenant of Mayors: https://www.covenantofmayors.eu/

[3] Green City Accord: http://www.greencityaccord.eu/

[4] EU Missions 100 climate-neutral and smart cities:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/funding/documents/ec_rtd_he-cities-mission-reveal-factsheet.pdf

2.2 Six Environmental Topic Areas

The selection of the European Green Leaf 2024 is based on the following 6 environmental topic areas:

1. Nature, Biodiversity, Sustainable Land Use and Soil
2. Air Quality and Noise
3. Waste and Circular Economy
4. Water
5. Climate Change and Energy Performance
6. Sustainable Urban Mobility

2.3 Technical Assessment Experts Panel

The Technical Assessment Panel consists of 12 international Experts. An elaborate profile for each of the Experts can be found on the EU Green Leaf website.

3. Technical Assessment of Finalist Cities

3.1 Results

The technical assessment conducted shortlisted as finalists the following cities (presented in alphabetical order) for the title of European Green Leaf 2024:

Bistriţa (Romania) – Elsinore (Denmark) – Velenje (Slovenia)

The cities have been invited to the next stage of the award process.

3.2 Elsinore Summary

The Municipality of Elsinore is situated on the coast of Oresund, a narrow strait separating Denmark and Sweden by just 4 km. The city has a population of 63,000 inhabitants. The coastline is 30 km long and the inland is rich in forests, lakes and open areas. Elsinore's sister city Helsingborg in Sweden is linked to Elsinore by ferry connection.

In June 2019, the City Council approved a new 2030 vision for the city. The main aim is to be a sustainable municipality and to create the best possible conditions to achieve this together. The municipality has committed to make sustainable choices and to act in a climate-friendly way. For almost 14 years, climate action in Elsinore has been sustained by goal setting and entering national and international commitments – several signed by the mayor. The municipality remains committed to long-term climate policy and corresponding actions.

3.3 Elsinore Technical Assessment

3.3.1 Nature, Biodiversity and Sustainable Land Use and Soil

Elsinore contains areas of natural heritage with high biodiversity value. The city has implemented a comprehensive Plan for Biodiversity. By doing so, the need to proactively direct land use and land management towards an ecological paradigm is acknowledged.

A combination of policies and activities focused on the management of existing natural areas and developing new natural areas is in place. As part of this, Elsinore should consider how nature-based solutions can help improve coastal habitat protection, which has been identified as a climate change concern.

Elsinore is raising the awareness of citizens on the need to safeguard and enhance natural areas and species, particularly children and park visitors.

3.3.2 Air Quality and Noise

Elsinore's noise abatement activities focus on noise generated by industry and traffic on main roads. Street traffic noise is not addressed in the application. Even if the health risks related to noise were low, a diagnosis could be helpful for the long-term. In this sense, the claim of a "car free" Elsinore is promising.

Elsinore does not measure its air quality with monitoring stations within the city limits. But the pollution levels of several measuring stations in the surrounding area may be representative of the pollution levels in the city. The air quality parameters of these monitoring stations are positive. The substitution of oil-fired boilers promoted by the city is a relevant action to reduce PM emissions.

3.3.3 Waste and Circular Economy

The current Resource & Waste Plan of Elsinore focuses on recycling, but Elsinore also has a supply and procurement policy that focuses on sustainable goods and eco-labels. Furthermore, the city maps its scope 3 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to improve its material management and use it for green procurement.

Elsinore has well-functioning collection and treatment systems resulting in a municipal recycling rate that exceeds the European targets for 2025. The collection system includes separate collection of recyclables, organic waste and other problematic waste streams.

In terms of citizen participation and public awareness, there are some interesting initiatives. such as the anti-litter initiative, the reuse of clothing initiative and the "Walk the Science" initiative for school classes.

3.3.4 Water

The technical data provided in the application indicates that the condition of Elsinore's water infrastructure is good. Furthermore, the application shows that past and future problems are being addressed and long-term solutions are being provided to improve the situation.

With the Water Supply Plan, Elsinore has established a long-term strategy. The application mentions activities to tackle groundwater pollution in the catchment used for drinking water supply and it discusses the city's ambition to use groundwater at a sustainable level, including rainwater infiltration. The city also has a wastewater management plan in place for rural and urban management. In addition, ecological targets have been set to improve rivers and lakes in accordance with the Water Framework Directive, as the quality of streams and lakes in the municipality is moderate to good. Furthermore, the city has a programme to rehabilitate 9 rivers to enable fish migration.

Citizens are involved in the city's plans. For instance, there are regular open days for schools and the public, and guides are available for homeowners on water management. The climate adaptation plan addresses flooding problems and encourages homeowners to disconnect their rainwater.

3.3.5 Climate Change and Energy Performance

Elsinore's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions per citizen per year over 2008-2019 show a total decrease of 51% over the period. The Plan for Climate and Sustainability 2020-2030 has a budget of 0.55 million euros per year for implementation. The city has an extra task force to accelerate the climate and energy renovations of family houses. Additionally, the application includes an informative diagram on the reduction path for GHG emissions until 2045.

Elsinore has adopted a Climate Adaptation Plan in 2022. The allocation of funding for coastal protection is positive, but the application lacks information on the expected outcomes and initiatives needed to implement the city's strategy.

The application shows the city has governance arrangements in place through a standing committee on climate and sustainability, and a children's climate council in 2022.The city has an energy campaign addressing the municipal administration. It has targeted media campaigns. It is positive to see citizen interaction on policy solutions. Elsinore has a Green Business Salon, which is a network and inspiration for local businesses on how to get started on sustainable change.

3.3.6 Sustainable Urban Mobility

Elsinore has a good cycling infrastructure and has allocated €300,000 to expand the network. Specific measures to encourage the use of alternative-fuel vehicles are defined. City centre restrictions could also reduce the environmental impacts of freight transport city-wide, including distribution and construction.

The Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) could have been better presented. The city also does not seem to have specific plans or measures to encourage shared mobility.