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The UIC Sustainability Impact Awards 2024 celebrate pioneering sustainability innovations in the rail sector

(Paris, 30 September 2024) On the evening of 25 September 2024, the UIC Sustainability Impact Awards Ceremony took place during the International Trade Fair for Transport Technology (InnoTrans), at the event's Platinum Sponsor Alstom's booth, in partnership with the Sustainable Development Foundation.

The prestigious contest honoured and showcased outstanding achievements in the global railway sector, highlighting best practices and innovative projects from railway companies which have had a demonstrable impact and have made rail more environmentally friendly, efficient, and ethically responsible.

The awards were presented in four key categories: **Customer Service**, **Cities and Communities**, **Innovation**, and **Seamless Connectivity**. Each category aligns with the UIC 2030 Vision "Design a Better Future" and links to a number of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) from India emerged as the overall winner with its remarkable **Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System project**.

An expert jury, jointly presided over by Christian Kern, former Federal Chancellor of Austria, and Lucie Anderton, UIC Head of Sustainability, reviewed and evaluated the entries.

The awards were generously supported by Platinum Sponsor **Alstom** and Silver Sponsor **AECOM**. The event was opened by Alstom's Chief Operating Officer, Danny Di Perna, who extended a warm welcome to the audience and underlined the importance of the rail industry working together to spread a positive narrative about the sector.

Anderton, and Raimondo Orsini, Director of the Sustainable Development Foundation, then co-hosted the event, with Anderton emphasising that *"It's so important to give recognition to those working tirelessly and passionately to make a real impact in sustainability, and through this we can inspire and encourage each other to scale up and speed up the transition to sustainable transport."*

Orsini continued by stating that the core business model of railway companies was already centred around sustainability, with their services offering a great solution for environmental and social issues. But, at the same time, railway companies should not rest on their laurels and should always improve. He finished by highlighting how the UIC Sustainability Impact Awards have shown that this improvement is ongoing, and that railway companies are constantly improving in terms of sustainability.

Jury President, and former Chancellor of Austria, Christian Kern added that *"Rail's impact on sustainability is significant, but we haven't even come close to unleashing its full potential. And,*

it is even more encouraging to see how tirelessly railway companies and professionals are contributing to greening transport.”

François Davenne, UIC Director General, closed the ceremony by highlighting how UIC was in the privileged position of being able to collate global information from its members and share these stories, shedding light on the action being taken in rail to ensure that train travel remains the cleanest and greenest mode of mass transport. *“By sharing these stories, we hope to inspire and find ways to work together to accelerate progress. For more trains, a more sustainable transport system, and a more sustainable way of life,”* he concluded.

Winners of the UIC Sustainability Impact Awards 2024

- **AAR–Norfolk Southern for Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience**
“This project is an example of how transport companies can invest in nature and bring win-win projects to fruition. Restoring the shoreline by using naturally filtering oyster beds will both reduce the risk of sea levels rising, and the potential costs for the company in the future, while, at the same time, creating a new habitat for birds and wildlife based on an interesting credits/offsetting system. We warmly encourage and wish success for Phase 2 of the project.”
Raimondo Orsini, Sustainable Development Foundation
- **DB Cargo Group for Energy and Decarbonisation**
“This project stood out in a very competitive category because they had thought of everything! A well thought out and executed project with measurable and impressive emission savings as well as delivering on circularity and partnering with academia. This has huge global rollout potential.”
Jason Smeak, AECOM
- **EFE Trenes de Chile for Modal Shift**
“Their ambitious plan to restore a railway service after 17 years stood out, and definitely deserves a UIC Award. It will bring great benefits to the people in the region, providing a fast and accessible service for the community.”
Holger Dalkmann, Sustain 2030
- **Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane for Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion**
“This is a best practice model for transport operators worldwide. As a user of public transport and railways, and on behalf of women and girls in all their diversity using public transport, I would like to express my deep gratitude to FS for launching this campaign!”
Floridea di Ciommo, CambiaMO
- **Italo SPA for Healthy Cities and Communities**
“This project is directly saving lives and making train journeys even safer by installing defibrillators on all trains and facilities. Thanks to trained staff using this equipment, they have already saved eight lives.”
Holger Dalkmann from Sustain 2030
- **NCRTC for Seamless Connectivity**
“As a transformative initiative, India's first Regional Rapid Transit System not only revolutionises travel by reducing commute times from four hours to just one, but also fosters regional connectivity and empowers women through entrepreneurial

opportunities, making it a benchmark for sustainable urban transit solutions.”

David Sarfatti, UIC

- **SNCF RESEAU** for *Natural Resources Management*

“SNCF Réseau has revamped the wooden sleeper treatment process at Bretenoux, incorporating copper oils and advanced testing to promote sustainability, while safeguarding the iconic French oak used in railway infrastructure. Backed by a €10 million investment, the project aims to enhance safety, increase efficiency, and have a reduced impact on the environment, with full commissioning targeted for 2025.”

Margrethe Sagevik, Sustainability and Life Sciences Consultant

Additionally, several shortlisted projects received special recognition from the jury due to their high level of quality and range, with **Amtrak** being highly commended for *Climate Change Resilience*, Belgium’s **SNCB** for *Diversity and Accessibility*, and Italy’s **RFI** for *Seamless Connectivity*.

UIC would again like to congratulate all of the winners for their extraordinary contributions and encourage continued innovation in the pursuit of a more sustainable and connected future.

To learn more about the UIC Sustainability Impact Awards, please visit <https://uic.org/event/uic-sustainability-awards/>.

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