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Inaugural World Canals Awards opens for entries

Scottish Canals has launched the first-ever World Canals Awards and is calling for organisations from around the globe to submit engaging, innovative and inspirational projects taking place on and along the world's waterways. The winners will be announced at the prestigious World Canals Conference in Inverness this September.

Led by a panel of international experts, the awards will celebrate innovative design and cutting-edge delivery by public, private and community organisations in a range of disciplines including sustainable tourism development, regeneration, heritage management, climate change and engineering.

Four awards are up for grabs: the Innovation Award, which celebrates canal-based projects that are technologically groundbreaking in their field; the Leadership Award, which recognises businesses, voluntary organisations or charities that are using the waterways to drive regeneration; the Guardian Award, which will celebrate outstanding work to safeguard the heritage of the world's waterways; and the Pioneer Award, which acknowledges projects that are paving the way in growing tourism or creating sustainable income streams linked to the world's canals. The deadline for submissions is August 19th 2016.

Steve Dunlop, Chief Executive of Scottish Canals, said: "I'm delighted to open the inaugural World Canals Awards for entries and I'm sure we'll receive some fantastic submissions. From Panama to Paris, there are a huge number of innovative projects taking place on canals all over the globe and waterways continue to play a vital role in the communities that line their banks.

"The World Canals Awards will celebrate those achievements, highlighting pioneering work in everything from water management and regeneration to climate change and engineering. We look forward to announcing the winners at the World Canals Conference in Inverness."

The prestigious four-day conference, which will take place on the 19th – 22nd September on the banks of the majestic Caledonian Canal, is set to welcome 300 business leaders and global professionals from a huge range of disciplines.

Dozens of speakers, academics and experts at the pinnacle of their fields feature on the programme, including Roland Lewis, President and CEO of the New York Waterfront Alliance; Alexander "Pete" Grannis, First Deputy Comptroller for the New York State Office of the State Comptroller; and Daniel Fábrega, Panama's Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

Each speaker will focus on one of the conference's four themes: Technical Challenges and Innovation; Safeguarding the Heritage of our Waterways; Waterways as a Driver for Regeneration; and Growing Tourism & Commercialising Waterway Assets.

For more information on the World Canals Awards, see <https://wccscotland.com/awards>

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Notes to the editor:

About Scottish Canals

Scottish Canals is responsible to the Scottish Government for the management and development of the Union, Monkland, Forth & Clyde, Crinan and Caledonian Canals. As well as the waterways themselves, Scottish Canals care for 251 bridges, 212 buildings, 256 locks, The Falkirk Wheel, The Kelpies and 19 water supply reservoirs in locations across Scotland. The reservoirs cover an area equivalent to 7,494 football pitches and supply the canals with the 332 million litres of water which flow through them each day

The Forth & Clyde, Union and Monkland canals in the Lowlands, the Crinan Canal in Argyll and the Caledonian Canal in the Highlands together extend over 137 miles from coast to coast, across country and into the cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness. Built two hundred years ago to fire the Industrial Revolution, Scotland's canals are now recognised as Scheduled Monuments and attract 22million visits per year

For more information, visit www.scottishcanals.co.uk or follow @ScottishCanals on Twitter

About the World Canals Conference

The biggest event in the international waterways calendar, Inverness joins an illustrious list of past World Canals Conference hosts including the Grand Canal in China, Montreal in Canada and New York in the USA. As well as innovative projects from around the globe, the 2016 World Canals Conference will also celebrate developments along Scotland's 137-mile waterway network, from the creation of The Kelpies – the largest equine sculptures on the planet – to The Falkirk Wheel's role as the world's only rotating boat lift and an iconic tourism destination.

Over 300 business leaders from more than a dozen countries will attend the four-day conference from the 19th – 22nd September, hearing from keynote speakers including Dr Jonathan Chambers, Team Leader in Geophysical Tomography at the British Geographical Survey; Riccardo Marini, Director of Gehl Architects; and Daniel Fabrega, Panama's Ambassador to the United Kingdom. More than 50 presentations and plenary sessions will also be held over the course of the conference.

As well as a range of high profile speakers, the event has also attracted sponsors and partners from around the globe. Red Bull; KLM; Air France; VisitScotland; the Scottish Government; the Year of Innovation, Architecture & Design; Sustrans; Linssen Yachts; AECOM; Visit Inverness Loch Ness; Peter Brett Associates; Highland Council; the Inverness Common Good Fund; Scottish Waterways

Trust; Rabbie's Trail Burners; Scottish Segway Centre; Loch Ness Centre; Pickering's Gin; and the Inverness Business Improvement District have also offered their support for the conference.

More information on the conference can be found at www.WCCscotland.com