

## Landscape as a Link, Saint-Paul, La Réunion, France

Further to the Western Landscape Plan, launched in the island of La Réunion by the central government in 1997, the community of municipalities of the west coast territory (covering an area of 53 000 ha), drew up a Landscape Charter in 2007. The charter sets out landscape quality objectives based on a landscape development grid. The overall aim is the development of “breathing spaces” on the coastline and urban interface areas, between built-up areas and nature. In 2009, the community of municipalities finalised an inter-municipal development plan for urban interface areas. At the same time, the central government produced an atlas of landscapes in La Réunion, highlighting landscape issues. While these landscape policy tools were taking shape, the regional authority implemented a model approach to development by using the creation of the Route des Tamarins as a pilot project to promote other actions in favour of a quality landscape – especially along its particularly sensitive northern section, where a town surrounded by natural areas made up of wetlands and gorges (Saint-Paul) is followed by a headland including a savannah landscape that is also protected (Cap la Houssaye). In this context, the landscape project that was carried out over a 12-year period has both reinvented the urban interface area outside Saint-Paul and brought the savannah landscape of the headland to the fore as a natural breathing space for the population.



The Committee of Ministers acknowledged and praised the great value of each project presented for the 5th Session 2016-2017 of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe’s European Landscape Convention and recommended making it well-known to the general public for its exemplary value, and as a source of inspiration. “Landscape as a Link” testifies to the ability of a group of institutions and citizens to optimise landscape integration of a road into the landscape within the specific context of the tropics, where biodiversity is magnified by climatic factors. The development carried out has contributed to the well-being of local residents and enables them to use the landscape in a manner in harmony with the abundance of nature.