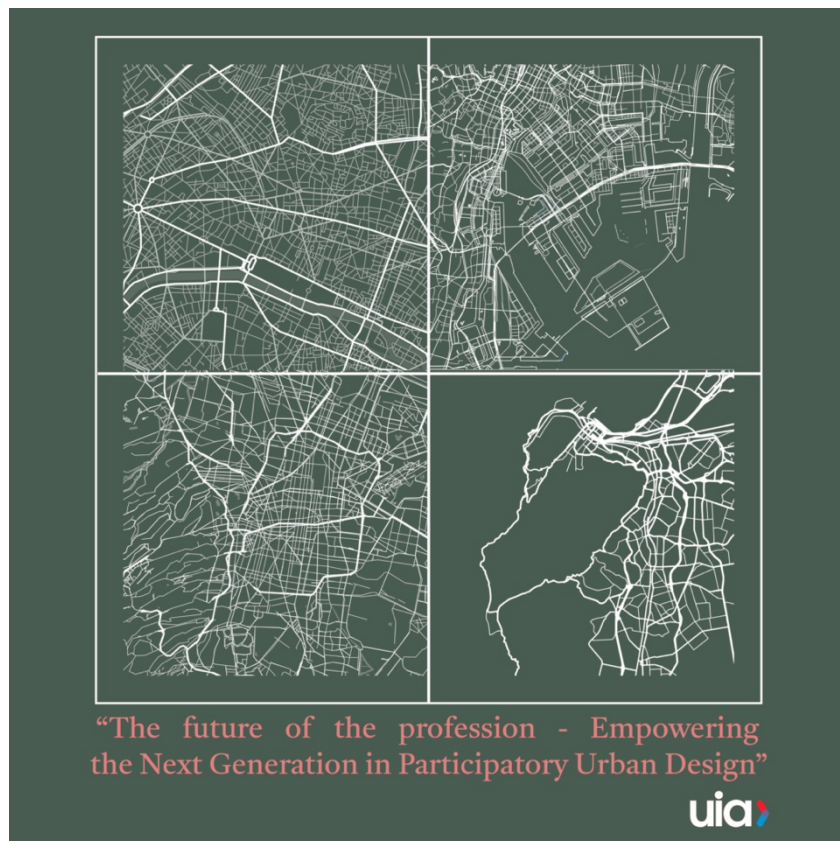




International Union of Architects

The Future of the Profession - Empowering the Next Generation in Participatory Urban Design

International single stage open ideas competition for young architects







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I. INTRODUCTION

1. General Information

The UIA and UNESCO, through the UNESCO-UIA Charter for Architectural Education, have long been dedicated to preparing future architects to devise innovative solutions for the present and the future. As new eras usher in profound and complex challenges, particularly regarding the social and functional degradation of many human settlements, the need for visionary architectural responses becomes increasingly critical in shaping the qualitative development of the built environment in a rapidly changing world.

This initiative offers young architects an opportunity to contribute to one of the most prestigious cultural initiatives – the Biennale di Venezia. Through their participation, the next generation can demonstrate their vision for enhancing the experience of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

This competition aligns with *Deep Surface: Polyfunctional architecture to enhance the experience of UNESCO designated sites*, an exhibition organised by UNESCO in collaboration with The Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU). The exhibition is scheduled to take place within the premises of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (Venice, Italy) from 10 May to 23 November 2025, concurrently with the 19th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. It will focus on the context-specific architectural and functional features of visitor centres in UNESCO-designated sites, namely World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves and UNESCO Global Geoparks. The exhibition will highlight their experiences and good practices in heritage interpretation, education, community-oriented services, enhancement of cognitive and physical site accessibility, and sustainable tourism management.

Building on these reflections, the UIA competition is also aligned with the theme of the UN-Habitat World Architecture Day 2024, *Empowering the Next Generation in Participatory Urban Design*. This theme encourages young architects to actively engage in participatory processes, underscoring their essential role in shaping sustainable development in connection with UNESCO sites.

The results will be evaluated by an international jury, and the winners will be announced at an awards ceremony held at Palazzo Zorzi – the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, in Venice. Their work will also be displayed in an exhibition at the commencement of the Biennale Architettura 2025, from 8 to 15 May.

2. Registration, questions and submission of entries

Competitors must use the UIA competitions platform to register, ask questions and submit the entries, according to the related deadlines.

<https://uia-competitions.org>

3. Key dates

Announcement date: 7 October 2024

Launch: 7 January 2025

Deadline for registration: 7 March 2025



Deadline for questions: 16 January 2025

Deadline for answers: 31 January 2025

Deadline for submission of entries: 7 March 2025 at 17:00 Paris time

Jury decision: 4 April 2025

Result announcement and Awards Ceremony: 7 May 2025

Vernissage (Exhibition Opening): 7 May 2025

Roundtable discussion: 8 May 2025

Exhibition at the Palazzo Zorzi, Venice: 8 to 15 May 2025

4. Summary of submission requirements

Each participant is free to select a UNESCO World Heritage Site situated within an urban context and propose a new “Visitor Centre”. Participants may choose a site from their home region (with reference to the 5 UIA Regions) or any other site of their preference.

The proposal must be comprehensively presented in A1 format (one), incorporating plans, sketches, images, and a written description of the concept.

For additional information, please refer to the submission requirements.

5. UIA Approval and Endorsement

This single-stage ideas competition for young architects is organised and conducted in accordance with UNESCO Standard Regulations for International Competitions in Architecture and Town planning and the UIA best practice recommendations (see UIA Competition Guide for Design Competitions in Architecture and Related Fields) and has been reviewed by the International Competitions Consultancy Board (ICC).

6. Organiser

The Organiser of the competition is the International Union of Architects’ Council, represented by Lilia Cannarella as the Professional Advisor.

II. REGULATIONS

1. Eligibility criteria

The competition is open to young architects (individual or in teams) from all over the world and comply with the following:

- The author(s)/ team leader(s) of the proposal must have the right to use the title of architect in their country of origin or residence.
- All participants must have been born on or after 1 January 1989.
- Students, associates, employees, family members or anyone closely related with jury members and persons involved in the preparation of this competition are not allowed to participate in the competition.
- Members of the UIA Council and the UIA Secretariat are not eligible to participate.

Multidisciplinary teams are encouraged. However, only architects can serve as team leaders or authors. Landscape architects, urban designers or urban planners can register as authors or co-authors. Team members from other disciplines can register as collaborators or consultants.



The participants are responsible for identifying conflicts of interest that would prohibit them from participating in the competition.

Participants are only allowed to participate in one team and submit one entry.

2. Official language

The official language of the competition is English. Entries and all documents submitted during the procedure must be submitted in the official language.

The planned round table discussions will be carried out exclusively in English.

3. Registration of competitors

Participants are required to register on the official UIA competition platform (<https://uiacompetitions.org/>) and fill the required information:

- Information of author, co-authors and other team members;
- Contact person and email address: Check box to confirm that the participant meets the eligibility criteria (mandatory).

The competition brief is available on the website for download without registration.

No fees are required for registering on the UIA competition platform.

Upon registration, participants will receive a number or code that they will use to log into the system and submit their entries.

4. Modification of team information

Applicants may list as many team members as they wish. Team members may also be added or removed after registration has closed; however the author(s) or team leader(s) cannot be changed. Modifications can only be made at the time of submission of entries, but this information must be provided separately from the entry submission.

5. Jury members and professional advisor

The entries will be evaluated by following international jury:

Manuel Herrero Sánchez, Architect, Spain (tbc)
Magdalena Landry, Director UNESCO Office Venice, Poland (tbc)
Cristóbal Tirado, Architect, Chile,
Doan Than Há, Architect, Vietnam
Omar Degan, Architect, Somalia

Alternate Juror:

Giacomo Ardesio, Architect, Italy

UIA Members of the Council - Daniel Fügenschuh (Austria), Lilia Cannarella (Italy) and Teresa Táboas (Spain) - will serve as the Technical Committee. The Professional Advisor for this Competition is Lilia Cannarella (Italy).



6. Timetable

Announcement	7 October 2024
Launch	7 January 2025
Deadline for questions	16 January 2025
Deadline for answers	31 January 2025
Deadline for registration	7 March 2025
Deadline for submission of entries	7 March 2025 at 17:00 Paris time
Jury decision	4 of April 2025
Announcement of results	7 May 2025
Awards ceremony	7 May 2025
Round table discussion	8 May 2025
Exhibition	8 to 15 May 2025

7. Questions and answers

Competitors may submit questions regarding the competition through the competition website (<https://www.uia-competitions.org/>) until the specified deadline. Questions related to eligibility will be answered on an ongoing basis until the deadline. Questions about the competition brief and the task will be compiled and published collectively on 31 January 2025. The competition organiser reserves the right to address similar questions together.

Questions must be submitted anonymously and must not include any information that could identify the applicant. Any questions failing to meet these requirements will not be accepted, published or answered.

8. Prizes and prize money

The total prize money available for the competition is € 15.000. Prizes are not subject to VAT.

1st prize € 5.000 and a certificate

2nd prize € 4.000 and a certificate

3rd prize € 3.000 and a certificate

4th prize € 2.000 and a certificate

5th prize € 1.000 and a certificate

At its discretion, the jury may also decide to allocate up to five honourable mentions to proposals of particular merit. Honourable mentions will not carry a monetary prize.

Prizes will be awarded within 30 days of announcement of the winners, with the total prize money paid in full. *Ex aequo* prizes will not be awarded. The number of prizes announced will be awarded.

Each prize winner will also receive an additional €1.000 for travel expenses to attend the awards ceremony and round table discussion in Venice.



9. Client's Intent

All participants, particularly the winners, will have the opportunity to present their projects to UNESCO, the press and the wider public. Proposals will also gain significant exposure through publication on the UIA website.

Competitors are encouraged to adopt participatory approaches, engaging with local authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and community members. Such collaboration can create opportunities to further develop the UNESCO site sustainably and inclusively in the future.

10. Submission and anonymity

Submission of entries must be made exclusively through the UIA competition platform, accessible at <http://uia-competitions.org>. The User Identification Number provided during registration will allow participants to submit their entries via this secure online form.

Participants are required to maintain anonymity while submitting their entries. The names of competitors must not appear on any part of the submitted materials.

All entries must display only their User Identification Number, as provided during registration, in the top right of the A1 panel.

After completing the submission, applicants will receive a confirmation email. Please note that modification to the application will not be possible once it has been submitted.

11. Technical support

In case of technical issues, applicants can contact the UIA Secretariat via competitions@uia-architectes.org

12. Submission requirements and deliverables

Submission of entries must be made exclusively through the UIA competition platform <http://uia-competitions.org>.

The User Identification Number provided during registration will allow participants to submit their entries via this secure online form.

Applicants are required to submit single A1 panel (portrait format) in PDF format, containing all relevant information necessary to understand the proposal.

The panel must include the following mandatory elements:

- A description of the concept for the proposal, including a reference to the identified challenges and/or threats, as well as an explanation of how the proposal addresses these findings.
- Graphic materials, at the participant's discretion, which may include but are not limited to:
 - Photographs and maps of the area including the proposal;
 - Relevant plans, sections and elevations;
 - Photographs, 3D views, sketches and/or collages for visualisation supporting the proposal;
 - Any other additional information.



Both graphical and metric scales are recommended for improved visualisation.

The incorporation of videos, QR codes, external links or similar types will not be accepted. Proposals containing such elements will have this information excluded from evaluation.

The submitted material must comply with the following formal requirements:

- Dimensions: A1 vertical (841 mm × 594 mm / 23.39 in × 33.11 in) with a maximum file size of 50MB;
- Digital format: PDF without metadata;
- User Identification Number: clearly visible in the top-right corner of the panel;
- File naming: Each entry must be named as follows: *User Identification Number.pdf*

No other forms of submission will be accepted.

13. Reasons for disqualification

Entries submitted after the deadline or failing to adhere to anonymity requirements will be excluded.

Any entries not meeting the conditions outlined in this brief or containing irregularities will be reported to the jury.

The jury will decide whether to disqualify such entries and record the decision in the jury report.

14. Evaluation

Preliminary Examination

The entries submitted will undergo an initial review conducted by the Professional Advisor, in collaboration with the technical committee, to verify their compliance with the submission requirements. This process will be completed before the entries are formally presented to the jury at the beginning of the evaluation procedure. The entries will be reviewed to ensure the following:

- Timely submission of the entry by the specified deadline;
- Full compliance with all the formal requirements outlined in the brief;
- Completeness and adherence to the deliverables and the project presentation criteria.

Evaluation process

Once constituted, the jury shall make all decisions relevant to the procedure, particularly the assessment of the proposals.

The jury will convene via an interactive video conference to review and deliberate on all entries.

During the evaluation session, the jury will assess and discuss all entries and evaluate them according to the set criteria.

The jury is required to rank the entries deemed worthy of a prize. Additionally, at its discretion, the jury may award up to five honourable mentions to proposals of particular merit.



A summarised jury report, including details of the evaluation procedure, will be published following the conclusion of competition.

Evaluation criteria

Submissions will be assessed solely on the criteria below (subcriteria serve as orientation):

- Compliance with the competition goals
- Urban and architectural design
 - integration within the existing environment
 - adaptation to local conditions
 - strengthening the site's identity
 - functionality and usability
- Social Impact
 - engagement of local population and community
 - empowering of local identity
- Sustainability
 - ecological
 - economic
 - social
 - cultural
- Contribution to improved Site Management
 - addressing identified challenges
 - fostering mindful visitation
 - tourism and accessibility management
 - support for site management goals
 - global relevance as model of best practice
- Coherence of overall concept.

15. Results announcement and publication

The UIA will individually notify all award winners (prizes and honourable mentions). Results will also be published on the competition website and other online platforms.

16. Jury decisions

Decisions are made by majority vote, with a separate vote for each entry. The chair, elected at the first jury meeting, holds a casting vote in the event of a tie. Jury decisions are sovereign, irrevocable and unappealable. They are final and binding for the competition organiser and the participants. The submission of an entry implies tacit acceptance of all conditions and rules outlined in these regulations and the results of the competition.

17. Author's rights

Competitors maintain the authors' rights on the submitted proposals. Competitors must affirm being the sole authors of the submitted proposal having full and exclusive rights to grant the UIA the authority to use the proposal.

By submitting an entry, competitors guarantee that they are the authors of the proposal and that they do not infringe author rights of third persons.



Competitors must expressly declare that they have checked the documents provided (photos, plans, etc.) for any existing copyrights, trademark rights or other third-party rights.

18. Publication rights

Competitors give the right to the UIA (including its Working Bodies and Member Sections) and to the UNESCO to publish the entries for the purpose of promoting the competition and its aims, and for research. They also grant the UIA the right of first publication.

- The UIA may publish the entries on its website, in exhibitions, press releases, social media, publications and other communication platforms. The names of the authors will be mentioned.
- Competitors are not allowed to publish their entry before the announcement of the competition results. Publication prior to the official announcement of the competition results will be grounds for disqualification.
- When publishing the submitted proposal, the competitors must mention the UIA as Organiser.

19. Announcement of winners and Exhibition

All winners will be notified by e-mail. The results of the competition will be officially announced during the awards ceremony.

All submitted proposals will be showcased online on the UIA website. Winning proposals will also be displayed at *Palazzo Zorzi*, the headquarters of the UNESCO Regional Bureau, located at Rio de S. Severo, 30100 Venice VE, Italy from 8 to 15 May 2025. At the discretion of the UIA, honourable mentions, and/or additional proposals may also be included in the exhibition.

The exhibition's opening and the awards ceremony are scheduled to take place on 7 May 2025 at the same venue.

20. Dispute resolution

By submitting an entry, participants accept all conditions of the competition, rules outlined in these regulations and decisions of the jury in matters of evaluation. It is not possible to appeal to the court system against the organiser and decisions of the jury. There will not be any arbitration or mediation. Any dispute concerning the competition procedure will be examined by the International Competitions Consultancy Board and will serve as feedback and experience for future reflection of the UIA. Eventual complaints may be addressed to the UIA Secretariat.

III. PROGRAMME

1. Task description

Context

Since 2018, the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, based in Venice, has explored the role of visitor centres in UNESCO-designated sites such as World Heritage properties, Biosphere Reserves, and Global Geo-parks. Four workshops were held between 2018 and 2022 to examine how visitor centres could enhance these sites' objectives, promoting interpretation, education, accessibility, and sustainable tourism.



In 2024, the UNESCO Regional Office in Venice partnered with The Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU) to launch a call for Participation for the exhibition *Deep Surface: Polyfunctional architecture to enhance the experience of UNESCO Designated Sites*. The exhibition will take place within the premises of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (Venice, Italy) from May to November 2025, concurrent with the 19th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia.

The call was open to official visitor centres associated with UNESCO-designated sites, including World Heritage properties, Biosphere Reserves and UNESCO Global Geoparks. The exhibition aims to showcase the experiences and best practices of selected visitor centres worldwide, focusing on heritage interpretation, education, community-oriented services, enhancement of cognitive and physical accessibility, and sustainable tourism management.

A "visitor centre" is defined as any physical facility within a site management system that facilitates the presentation, interpretation, access, and sustainable visitation of UNESCO-designated sites. These centres may take various forms and names, such as "site museums," "interpretation centres," "information centres," "community centres," "houses," or "gateways," but they all share similar purposes.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites around the world face a wide range of complex challenges, including the overwhelming influx of tourists, which can strain not only the site but also the local populations and communities. Some sites are further jeopardised by wars, political upheavals, and social disputes, while others are threatened by specific climate challenges. Many World Heritage Sites require global attention to prevent their destruction and disappearance.

Visitor centres in UNESCO-designated sites can play a crucial role in addressing these challenges and advancing to the sites' objectives. By leveraging the natural, cultural, and collective 'inherent intelligence' of locations, visitor centres can contribute to heritage conservation and management through a people-centred approach.

Task

The International Ideas Competition titled *The future of the Profession - Empowering the Next Generation in Participatory Urban Design* focuses on the critical challenges faced by UNESCO Cultural Heritage sites in urban contexts around the world. This initiative invites young architects globally to get engage with this heritage and propose innovative solutions that address contemporary issues while contributing to the broader goals of heritage conservation and sustainable urban development.

The competition encourages participants to reflect on fundamental questions that extend beyond construction, such as:

- The meaning of world cultural heritage for younger generations and society as a whole.
- The importance of preserving cultural heritage and making it accessible and understandable to the public.
- Strategies to foster understanding and knowledge without leading to over-tourism or potential damage to these sites.
- How to cultivate a sense of connection between the local population and their cultural heritage.
- The role a built structure can play in addressing these challenges.
- The potential contributions of digitalisation and artificial intelligence to heritage preservation and education.



Participants are encouraged to reflect on these and other pertinent issues and propose innovative visions for a new visitor centre to a UNESCO Cultural Heritage site of their choosing, situated within an urban context. In doing so, they should address site-specific challenges and align their proposals with the site's objectives.

Participants may choose to engage with a local site or any other UNESCO Heritage Site that is set within an urban context. Proposals must outline the reasons for selecting the site, identify the challenges it presents, and demonstrate how the visitor centre can foster sustainable tourism, heritage conservation, education, and community engagement. Additionally, it should ensure inclusivity and be responsive to the social and cultural context of the area.

Participants are encouraged to engage in multidisciplinary teams, employing diverse approaches, and promoting a participatory process that involves the local neighbourhood and community. The findings of this engagement should be reflected in their proposals.

The Future of the Profession - Empowering the Next Generation in Participatory Urban Design International Ideas Competition targets the younger generation of architects worldwide. It invites them to envisage innovative solutions that, through context-sensitive, site-specific strategies, address local challenges while contributing to our shared cultural heritage.

2. Documents provided to competitors

As the participants select the site themselves, no documents will be provided to the competitors. Participants are advised to study relevant UNESCO information pertaining the chosen site and provide the jurors with the necessary documents that will enable them to assess the proposal. A number of helpful links are provided in the Appendices for further information and inspiration.

IV. APPENDICES

The participants may find the following UNESCO links to be useful sources of information:

Interactive map of UNESCO Sites:

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/interactive-map/>

Visitor Centres in UNESCO Designated Sites

4 workshops and reports <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/visitor-centres-unesco-designated-sites?hub=66976>

Discover World Heritage Sites, Heritage Journeys Online

<https://visitworldheritage.com/en/home>

Call for Participation: Exhibition Venice 2025

<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/call-participation-exhibition-deep-surface-polyfunctional-architecture-enhance-experience-unesco?hub=66976>