

COUNCIL OF ARCHITECTURE

INDIA HABITAT CENTER, CORE 6A, FIRST FLOOR, LODHI ROAD, NEW DELHI 110 003

THE URBAN STUDIO RESEARCH PROJECT (USRP) CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Council of Architecture (COA) has initiated a unique research project titled "The Urban Studio". The primary intent of the project is to encourage institutions located in different regions of the country to proactively engage in issues of the built environment in our cities. The thrust is on helping cities achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the UNDP. The institutions would help formulate localized SDGs relevant to their contexts and engage with either the hometown/city of the institution or the nearest city within the jurisdiction of an urban local body.

Project Brief:

Cities are home to a large portion of the world's population. The urban landscape of our country is fast undergoing transformation. The urban landscape and the communities living therein are faced with various challenges due to contemporary forms of urbanization and industrialization. These forms of development which are gigantic as well as authoritarian seem to manifest themselves in modes of consumption, living conditions, wellbeing and socio-environmental effects. Disasters and pandemics serve to aggravate vulnerabilities and social inequalities.

Architects play a major role in shaping the built environment which creates the setting for producing complex interdependencies among environmental, built, and social systems that function at a civic and cultural level. Efforts are needed to engage the fraternity of educators and practitioners together with the students of architecture to create an understanding of the issues which plague our urban centers. There is a need to discuss and deliberate upon what could be the contribution of architects towards making cities more livable and urban areas more resilient and capable of meeting the demands for food production, transport, housing, energy and water while supporting an inclusive and sustainable lifestyle for all urban residents. It is also essential to engage with society as well as policy makers, urban planners and urban designers in a participatory approach to resolve these issues and complement government action. These issues are quite common and have manifested themselves in various forms in various locations. Thus addressing it in a wider perspective will help us understand the phenomenon better and come up with a wide range of solutions.

It is proposed that this research project would be initiated at various locations in the country by the COA-TRC, Pune.

The Urban Studio Project will have three Phases:

Phase 1: The Workshop Phase

Phase 1 in which research ideas will be formulated, will be supported by the Council of Architecture in the form of training programs and workshops after receipt of applications from prospective participant institutions (by nominating faculty members as researchers or principal investigators).

In this phase, the aim would be to get prospective researchers-faculty members and resource persons on a common platform, through a workshop, to discuss research ideas that could turn into full-fledged research proposals. Simultaneously the researchers-faculty members and resource persons would formulate and develop an implementation plan for the study in urban areas during the workshop.

Phase 2 : The Independent Research Phase:

During Phase 2, the researchers-faculty members conduct their independent research at their chosen locations. Each of these researchers would closely work with identified communities to carry on the work done in these workshops stated above in detail. The researchers who would work at various locations in the country can then present their experiences and knowledge through seminars and discussions organized by COA-TRC, Pune, at the end of the first three months, and after every six months.

Phase 2 could be financially supported by a seed grant from COA and/or research grants from other funding institutions for the Research Proposals that have been formulated in Phase 1 by various participant researchers.

Apart from carrying on the research work the responsibilities of these researchers would be to organize workshops and training programs through their institutes with COA-TRC, at various locations for students and faculties of schools of architecture in their own region. Therefore, it is important that the researcher is able to establish a network between educational institutes, community-based organizations, local government agencies and local communities so that they can closely work with each other.

The workshops can be organized by charging a certain amount of registration fee from participating faculty and students, as per existing Council of Architecture norms.

Phase 3 : The Dissemination Phase.

During Phase 3, the outcome of the projects from the selected institutions in the form of papers will be compiled in a publication to be distributed to all colleges of architecture and the wider audience. The finding of the researchers will be made available to a wider audience in the form of Conferences, Seminars and Publications.

Phase 3 will be supported by the Council of Architecture.

The time frame:

The complete duration of the Urban Studio Research Project will be for two years.

Call for applications:

COA invites architectural institutions (by nominating faculty members as Principal investigator and Researchers) to submit the first round of proposals for "The Urban Studio". The first round can be flexible and open so that colleges can develop their applications responding to their institutional framework and specific characteristics of their chosen city. The institutes have the freedom to decide the scale of intervention and the nature of the final submission that might be relevant.

The applications would be shortlisted under the criteria listed below:

Project's engagement with architecture – The project framed by the institute must be able to engage with the scale and issues relating to architecture within the chosen urban condition. The research teams should prepare the architectural intervention within the framework of the SDGs that they decided to engage. It would be valuable if the project can expand the existing discourse of architecture within the chosen area of interest.

Institutional Capacities to engage varied academic stakeholders – While structuring the project, institutions have the freedom to organize it either as studios or as research projects that need to be coordinated by a faculty member. It can also be a combination of both approaches within the institute's existing academic and research framework. However, the institute would attempt to ensure the participation of faculty, student body, and fresh alumni as far as possible.

Encourage participation of community-based organizations - Project proponents are encouraged to collaborate with local community-based organizations or NGOs, involved in addressing similar issues. In many cases, such organizations can help realize the outcome of the project proposal prepared by the institutions in their specific contexts.

Seek support from urban local bodies for the project – Depending on the nature of the project; the study team can seek support for the realization of the project from the respective urban local bodies. A letter of support in any form from the urban local body towards this would be an added advantage. However, this is not mandatory.

Indicate possibilities of project funding – If possible, the project should attempt to indicate funding sources from where it might receive additional funding support apart from a seed grant given by the COA to the selected projects. In such cases, it might connect to presently available schemes/awards that international agencies, various government bodies, or other public or private institutions might support.

The submission requirement for the first round of application is as below :

1. An introduction to detail the specific context in which the study team has conceived the project and connect it to the SDGs (500 words).
2. The project's engagement with the discipline of architecture (500 words)
3. The mode of institutional engagement (300 words)
4. Methodology of conducting the study (900 words)
5. Detailing the outcome of the research (300 words)

The study team can additionally use diagrams and images to explain their proposal. Any material used from secondary sources should be given due acknowledgments.

Each application must be accompanied by a copy of the registration/declaration/proof of identity in the specified format (Registration Form and Declaration Forms) signed by the principal Investigator and the head of the institution, enclosed in an envelope. Each applicant must be prepared to satisfy the Jury that he is the bonafide author of the project that is submitted.

The complete set of Registration Forms (Registration Form and Declaration Forms) duly filled in and completed in all respects, together with the project details as prescribed, should be received, in original, by registered speed post or forwarding agent at the address below not later than the declared deadline. Details of Declaration Forms will be published on www.coa.gov.in shortly.

Director,

Council of Architecture Training & Research Centre (COA-TRC),

2nd Floor, A-4(B), Abhimanshree, Off. Pashan Road, Pune - 411 008.

Tel: 0-9764-000-352, Email: directorcoatrc@gmail.com

No registration fee is charged.

LINK to REGISTER for USRP: <https://forms.gle/DyYvbX4xVKUkUpCs6>

Important Dates:

Call for Applications – 5th August 2021

Submission of Proposals – 26th August 2021, 23:59 (IST)

Evaluation of Proposals – 9th September 2021

Final Shortlisting of Proposals from colleges – 15th September 2021

Workshops with the shortlisted colleges – 2 days each (Subsequent to the declaration of shortlisted colleges)

First workshop – October 2021

Financial Assistance

The COA would facilitate the process by supporting the identified faculty members of the chosen institution financially with a seed grant.

Further, to fund this research project, various government departments at the level of the state and centre associated with urban development could be presented this proposal. Funds may be available under research for infrastructure up-gradation programs related to housing, sanitation, roads, water, etc. Also various trusts, which fund research projects can be approached with the proposal.

Awards:

On completion of the project, COA will award ten projects based on the ability to:

- achieve the final stated outcome,
- be funded through present schemes and awards, public impact in its context, and finally,
- create new knowledge in the discipline.

In addition to the seed grant to the proposals selected under the Urban Studio project, Council of Architecture will award:

To the three best projects to be published, an amount of Rs. 1,00,000/- each

To the next seven projects to be published, an amount of Rs. 75,000/- each

Advisory Committee

To evaluate the initial applications and help the COA implement the Urban Studio, the COA has constituted an (advisory) core committee of academicians and practitioners. The initial task of the committee would be to shortlist colleges based on their proposal.

If there are more applicants, it could call for a **second round** of shortlisting based on further detailing of the proposals.

As the project proceeds, the committee could facilitate the chosen institutions to interact with various government agencies to explore ways to synchronize their effort with existing schemes or projects. It could also advise how architecture colleges could work with stakeholders like the urban local bodies, non-governmental organizations, communities, and other local experts to document, analyze and intervene meaningfully in their contexts.

The role of the COA and the advisory committee through this process would be limited to facilitating interaction among agencies while encouraging institutions to play the lead role in the coordination and implementation of the research proposal. The progress of the research work will be monitored by the COA from time to time.

Composition of the Core Committee:

1. Prof. Habib Khan, Nagpur, Chairman
2. Dr. Srivathsan, Chennai, Invited Expert
3. Dr. Sridharan, Bhopal, Invited Expert
4. Dr. Madhumita Roy, Kolkata, Invited Expert
5. Dr. Sandeep Virmani, Bhubaneswar, Invited Expert
6. Prof. Aneerudha Paul, Mumbai, Project Coordinator
7. Prof. Jayashree Deshpande, Pune, Project Coordinator