



INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS COMMISSION

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**Achieving design excellence through
international architectural Competitions**

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF ARCHITECTS

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THE VALUE OF COMPETING

UIA President
Thomas Vonier



Clients for buildings have long been attracted to design competitions, hoping to obtain the best and most creative proposals from a large field of entrants, hoping that design innovation will result from many people advancing new ideas that vie for distinction.

Architects have long participated in design competitions because they regard them as occasions to test new ideas, to display untapped talent and to gain commissions that might not otherwise be available.

All participants hope that the resulting work will gain wide public and critical acclaim, becoming admired and even famous all while remaining within budget and meeting key functional requirements. These co-existing hopes and aspirations are fulfilled in the best competitions and certainly in notable ones organised under auspices of the UIA.

Great examples of architecture - beacons of design innovation and design excellence - have enhanced the appeal of international design competitions, even as variations have emerged that sometimes narrow the field of eligible participants and aim to give clients greater control over outcomes.

Even with these variations, however, the basic principles of UIA-endorsed competitions are immutable; they remain of vital concern to all parties: fairness, transparency, affordability, a focus on design excellence, the involvement of highly qualified, impartial jurors and explicit, clear criteria for judging.

These were the reasons why, in 1956, now some 65 years ago, UNESCO conferred upon the UIA the solemn mission to oversee international design competitions in architecture and town planning.

Our work through the years, under the leadership of the UIA International Competitions Commission, has upheld and strengthened these values. We have proved time and again the worth of competitions as a means by which organisations can obtain outstanding design results and as a process in which all parties can have the highest confidence.

Thomas Vonier has worked on the challenges of urbanisation, conflict, insecurity and changing climate patterns. Based in Paris and Washington DC, he works with public and private clients to secure industrial operations, hotels, universities and commercial in addition to working with municipalities to improve urban security. A board-certified urban security professional, he led ground-breaking research for United States embassies and consulates, resulting in landmark recommendations to the US Secretary of State. He has lectured widely on architecture, and was a research affiliate with the Laboratory of Architecture and Planning at MIT.

THE VALUE OF DESIGN COMPETITIONS

ICC Co-Directors Regina Gonthier Jerzy Grochulski



Design competitions can only achieve their objectives if their conditions are fair.

Written in 1956 and revised in 1978, the [UNESCO Standard Regulations for International Competitions in Architecture and Town Planning](#) remain a global reference for design competitions. They are based on the main tenets of transparency, equal treatment and non-discrimination and guarantee professional evaluation under anonymity as well as the protection of authors' rights.

The [UIA Competition Guide for Design Competitions in Architecture and Related Fields](#), developed by the UIA International Competitions Commission (ICC) in 2016, includes updated best practice recommendations for the implementation of the UNESCO Regulations and can also be used for national competitions. **With a handful of UIA-endorsed competitions launched every year, the UIA's goal is to set high standards, advocate best practices worldwide and promote design quality.**

The UIA began collaborating with national professional organisations on organising international competitions in 1950. Entrusted by UNESCO to supervise the application of the Regulations and assist competition organisers, the UIA is proud of the successful UIA-endorsed competitions which led to the construction of buildings such as the Sydney Opera House, the Centre Pompidou and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

Exceptional projects and extraordinary solutions can lead to innovation and become important architectural references. Competitions are the best means for **contributing to a wide-ranging design quality in order to improve the quality of the built environment. They should not be organised only for prestigious pilot projects.** Design competitions are suitable for all architectural tasks, simple or complex, large or small while ensuring that the effort re-

mains proportionate to the scale.

Today's political discourse, particularly in Europe, where discussion centres on the Baukultur and New European Bauhaus initiatives, recognises that a **high-quality built environment is a necessity and a matter of public interest, best achieved through well-managed design competitions, proved to be the best tool for finding suitable solutions for architectural tasks.** Their recognition and appropriate implementation in national legislations and cultures is in progress although the process is slow.

Design competitions challenge the core specificity of the profession, the ability to translate needs into spatial solutions and respond architecturally to the particularities of the task, its context and its location. They allow the organiser to procure an optimal, high-quality project and to find in its author a competent partner. The comparison of multiple projects enables the jury to get an overview of the possible solutions and to recommend the best solution. For architects, winning a design competition is the most noble and honourable way of obtaining a mandate.

Competitions must be fair in their essence, providing equitable conditions for the competition and the subsequent contract between the client and the winner. Design competitions are a fantastic, but delicate tool that can easily lead to misuse when not properly conducted. Every competitor undertakes a considerable intellectual, creative and economic effort in the hopes of winning and realizing the project, or at the least, receiving a prize or special mention that can be used as a reference. **The competition organiser and the jury, therefore, have obligations and responsibilities towards the competitors.**

Briefs must be seriously prepared and only relevant work for the evaluation and concept proposals should be requested.

The requirements must be appropriate and relevant to the task. Competitors must be granted sufficient time to elaborate their proposals as well as being accorded the greatest possible liberty and intellectual freedom of interpretation. Professional jurors must be competent and independent from the client and the participants. The organizer must clearly declare how the results of an ideas competition will be used and commit to award the winner of a project competition a contract for the mission with a sufficient scope of services including in particular the architectural direction. Key parameters of the future client-winner collaboration must be realistic and fair. Authors' rights must be respected in all phases and all cases.

In principle design competitions should be open in order to promote new talents. They should avoid excessive requirements and remain accessible and affordable for all. For young architects, a successful design competition provides an excellent basis for starting their practices. Competition organisers are therefore asked to trust the professional capacity of the competitors in general and the authors who proved their competence by achieving the best solution in particular.

The UIA supports international design competitions conducted in accordance with the UNESCO Regulations because they uphold the highest cultural and artistic values and are more likely to produce architecture of distinction. The UIA promotes international design competitions open to professionals from all countries without restriction and recommends open procedures because they offer enhanced opportunity for the emergence of innovative ideas. Following the UIA's goals, endorsed competitions respect the holistic, culture-centred and interdisciplinary approach aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Endorsement by the UIA is an assessment of conformity to UNESCO Regulations and the UIA best practice recommendations. It is a guarantee of fair conduct of the competition with equitable conditions for the competitors and the winner. **UIA endorsement is thus a quality label.**

Regina Gonthier is a practicing architect and co-owner with her husband of their office in Bern. She has been visiting professor of architecture at the ETHZ and member of expert councils for architecture and urban planning of several Swiss cities. She has participated at numerous competitions as competitor or jury member. As Vice-President of the Swiss Competition Commission, she was the Chair for the last revision of the Swiss Competition Regulations (SIA 142) and member of the ACE Work Group ADC+PP. Currently, she is the President of the Swiss Conference of Architects (CSA), Swiss Delegate at the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) and Co-director of the ICC.

Jerzy Grochulski is a professor in the Warsaw School of Technology's architecture department. He is the director and partner of the PRO-ARTE11 architectural studio specialising in sports facilities, schools, public and residential buildings and places of worship. He has served as President, Secretary General and Vice-President of the Association of Polish Architects (SARP).

Competition Organiser Peter Benuska



Loi 130 Competition (2019) - Brussels, Belgium

Restricted two-stage project competition

71 applicants from 16 countries

28 teams selected to phase 1; 9 teams selected to phase 2

Why did you choose to organise a competition?

The Loi 130 urban block in the European quarter of Brussels, Belgium is a very complex task for two reasons. Firstly, the competition sought to set an example in terms of environmental sustainability, aiming to create new administrative complex with a lot of flexibility, multifunctionality and accessibility of outdoor spaces for all.

Secondly, it is a project that is large in scale, with up to 190,000 sq. meters of gross floor area above ground.

We were looking for creative solutions with many added values. The Loi 130 project as the largest building complex of the European Commission will become part of Brussel's skyline and part of the pedestrian/cycling network. The design should demonstrate an appropriate conceptual strength according to the values of the EU.

What were the biggest challenges you encountered?

The direct engagement of the European Commission employees (including the Master Architect of the European Commission – a position established in 2016) in preparation and organisation of the competition was something completely new.

The biggest challenges were the search for the balance between principles of the architectural competition according to the UNESCO-UIA regulations and the very strict application of public procurement procedure. We also had to ensure the respect of anonymity when selecting participants among candidates, responding to questions and when organising a colloquium in the presence of the selected participants.

What were the lessons learned for future competitions?

The main lesson learned - which is transferable to all public bodies - is that architectural competitions and public procurement go together hand in hand. These procedures have similar objectives, aiming for transparency and searching for the most appropriate solutions. They are not contradictory, but complementary.

The involvement of political authorities in the process and the jury (in this case the College of European Commissioners) gives an added value to the competition itself and lends credibility to the project in the future.

The excellent results of the Loi 130 competition also inspired the European Parliament and the EU Commission Joint Research Centre to use the same methodology in searching for the best solutions for their building projects.

What did UIA endorsement bring to you?

For the European Commission it was very important to get the UIA quality label as mandated by UNESCO to ensure the participation of high-level creative and experienced interdisciplinary/multi-professional teams, highly qualified jurors of which the majority were architects.

The constructive remarks on the draft of the Competition Brief and the discussions with UIA ICC representatives before endorsement provided a strong support for professional requirements and were very useful for the final version. Personally, I consider this as the cornerstone for a successful architectural competition.

Peter Benuska is an architect and urban planner; former Master Architect of the European Commission and former Master Architect of Bratislava (Slovenia). He was also the Co-Author of the Master Plan of Algiers (Algeria). Peter was in charge of the Loi 130 competition completed in 2019 and organised by the European Commission with the aim of identifying the best solution to replace part of its ageing offices in the European quarter of Brussels (Belgium).

More about the competition: <https://bit.ly/ui-a-en-loi-130>



1st prize: Rafael de la-Hoz Arquitectos (Spain), Perkins+Will (UK), Latz + Partner Landscape Architecture Urban Planning (Germany), Tecnica y Proyectos (Spain) and MC2 Estudio de Ingeniería (Spain)



2nd prize: 2Portzamparc (France), Florence Mercier Paysagiste (France) and Artelia Bâtiment & Industrie (France)



3rd prize: BURO II & ARCHI-I / B2Ai (Belgium), C.F. Møller Architects (Denmark), DELVA Landscape Architects (Netherlands) and VK Engineering (Belgium)

Competition Organiser

Denis Leontiev

Tuchkov Buyan Park Competition (2020)
St. Petersburg, Russia
Restricted one-stage project competition
229 applicants from 50 countries
8 teams selected to participate in the competition



Why did you choose to organise a competition?

Designing urban public spaces means working towards a common understanding and an agreement between citizens, experts and authorities. An architectural competition is a good way to reach this consensus, respecting the needs of all the stakeholders while arriving at the best solution. The site of the future Tuchkov Buyan Park used to be a problematic area in the heart of Saint Petersburg. The debate about its future had been going on for over 20 years.

Located within a UNESCO World Heritage site, the area had long been excluded from the urban fabric in spite of its central position. The architectural competition for Tuchkov Buyan Park provided the opportunity to rectify the situation and give the land back to the city. Strelka KB has been specialising in national and international urban planning and design competitions since 2014 as well as hosting experimental competitions aimed at young and upcoming professionals. The competition brief was based on the needs and insights of the local residents as well as on the assessments from relevant experts. The winning proposal is a combination of Russian and international best practices.

What were the biggest challenges you encountered?

The challenge was setting up the dialogue between the authorities and the public; this was essential in preparing the brief and establishing the necessary level of trust.

The pandemic was another major challenge. The final jury session had to be held online. In order to guarantee the required procedural transparency, the anonymity of proposals and the productivity and openness of discussion, we had to envisage a new mode of holding long-distance sessions.

What were the lessons learned for future competitions?

We arrived at a formula for a successful architectural competition. There are three necessary components: a concise brief, a transparent procedure and competent participants. The brief is the phase where the aims, goals, and expected results of the competition are discussed in-depth. We believe that involving local communities and local experts at this stage makes the outcomes of the competition acceptable for the public. Transparent procedures, fair compensation and an expert jury are the recipe for recruiting professional teams from across the globe and identifying the right balance of innovativeness and feasibility at the stage of final decisions.

What did UIA endorsement bring to you?

The valuable experience of working jointly with the UIA to set out the rules and procedures of the competition allowed us to bring in a diverse array of professional participants. Moreover, the UIA representative in the jury certified the compliance of the procedures to international standards.

Denis Leontiev is the CEO and founder of Strelka KB, consultancy and integrated urban planning practice based in Moscow (Russia). Strelka KB was mandated by DOM.RF Foundation, the competition organiser, to manage the **international competition for the architectural landscape design concept of Tuchkov Buyan Park** in Saint Petersburg (Russia).
More about the competition: <https://competitions-awards.uia-architectes.org/en/competition/tuchkov-buyan-park/>



1st prize: Studio 44 (Russia) and WEST 8 (The Netherlands)



2nd prize: JV Vogt (Switzerland) and Herzog & de Meuron (Switzerland)



3rd prize: Hvoja (Russia) and KARAVAN landskapsarkitekter (Sweden)

Competition Organiser

Ruta Leitanaite

National Concert Hall Competition (2019) - Vilnius, Lithuania
Open project competition
305 registered participants
248 submitted projects from 57 countries



Photo credit: Tomas Bauras

Why did you choose to organise a competition?

The ambition of Vilnius City Municipality (the competition’s Contracting Authority) is to build a Concert Hall that would not only fulfil the standards of contemporary concert hall, but would also become a landmark of quality architecture in the city and a symbol of European, democratic values. Therefore, a competition was chosen as the most efficient way to achieve the best architectural ideas. Collaborating with Architects Association of Lithuania (AAL, the competition organiser), the idea of a UIA-UNESCO competition emerged.

AAL has been a member of UIA for more than 20 years. Since 1956, when UNESCO ratified the regulations for international competitions in architecture and urban planning, UIA-UNESCO competitions have earned a reputation as high-standard, transparent and efficient procedures, resulting in quality design and innovation.

It is a quality brand for architects as well. The history of UIA-UNESCO competitions proves that this kind of procedure attracts the best architects from all the world and results in great architecture. Participation of local and foreign architects were very welcome in this competition, as it is not every day that one can design a concert hall of national importance and the city can build it. The more quality ideas the competition receives, the greater the chance of finding the most suitable concept for the city of Vilnius.

What were the biggest challenges you encountered?

The biggest challenge was to combine the quality competition characteristics with Lithuanian Public Procurement Law regulations. We had long and tough discussions and negotiations with the Public Procurement Office of Lithuania and the Public Procurement department of the City about how to construct the desired structure and procedure of the competition without violating the Law, which is, in a nutshell, not adapted to design competitions.

On the practical side, dealing with the unprecedented quantity of entries (248 entries) was challenging. Other challenges included finding the venue for a public exhibition and managing the evaluation procedure, a process completed thanks to a very efficient and responsible Jury work, assisted and guided by ICC Co-Director Regina Gonthier.

What were the lessons learned for future competitions?

With this competition, we have tried out some innovations in design competitions, done under the Public Procurement Law. For example, a design price criterion was discarded, leaving only architectural quality criteria listed. The evaluation procedure ensured that the final result is reached unanimously by the discussions among the Jury members, and not by arithmetical calculations that usually lead to unsatisfactory results. Also, the Jury consisted only of professionals (usually, in Public Procurement competitions, representatives of institutions are involved in the Jury). This paved the way for a very professional and holistic evaluation.

What did UIA endorsement bring to you?

Incredible global visibility. Trust among the international community of architects. We were informed that the UIA label functions as proof that a competition will be transparent, fair and based on quality criteria. Finally, it was a huge educational activity: not only for AAL, as the organisers, but also for the Municipality and State institutions. The competition, endorsed by UIA, has set a precedent for quality design competitions and has had an impact on competition culture in Lithuania in practice and even legislatively (that is being currently transformed).

Ruta Leitanaite is President of Architects Association of Lithuania, which organised the **International architectural design competition for the National Concert Hall** in Vilnius (Lithuania).
More about the competition: <https://bit.ly/ui-a-national-concert-hall>



Photo of the site



1st prize: Arquivio Architects (Spain)



1st prize: Arquivio Architects (Spain)

Competition Organiser

Maria Acetoso

Competition for the Reconstruction & Rehabilitation of Al Nouri Complex (2020) - Mosul, Iraq
Open project competition
666 registered participants
122 submitted projects from 57 countries



Why did you choose to organise a competition?

The idea of organising a design competition came from the actual conditions of the site and the request by the relevant Iraqi authorities to include new educational and cultural functions to serve the community as part of the reconstruction process. In fact, the area of work also includes an additional site, originally not part of the historical perimeter of the Mosque, where the majority of these new functions were to be located. These needs required a strong design component, for which a competition seemed to be the most appropriate answer, being a process that proposed a range of quality designs.

What were the biggest challenges you encountered?

One of the major challenges has been to move forward with the process, during an ongoing global pandemic, which brought a number of limitations. In particular, the impossibility of jurors visiting the site, and the need for organising the jury meeting online and for finding alternative solutions to ensure the effectiveness of the overall process.

What were the lessons learned for future competitions?

When the competition is run in post-disaster contexts, the need to raise awareness among local stakeholders, who can, in fact, be unfamiliar with the complexity of the process. An intense consultation and awareness raising process, done beforehand, can enhance the feeling of ownership and participations by local stakeholders, which is, of course, a key contribution to the sustainability of the overall process.

What did UIA endorsement bring to you?

UIA collaboration was critical in all steps of the competition, from the preparation of the brief, to the organisation of the jury session and final announcement. The UIA ensures that the process respects international standards, and that space is given to the quality of the proposed designs. Their guidance has been essential, especially considering the special circumstances of this competition: its sensitive context and the global pandemic.

Maria Acetoso is a Senior Project Officer at UNESCO, which organised the **International Architecture Competition for the Reconstruction & Rehabilitation of Al Nouri Complex in Mosul, Iraq**. This competition was conducted with the support of the Government of United Arab Emirates, the Prime Minister of Iraq and the UN Secretary-General.
More about the competition: <https://bit.ly/ui-a-al-nouri>



Aerial photo of the site



1st prize: Salah El Din Samir Hareedy, Khaled Farid El-Deeb, Sherif Farag Ebrahim, Tarek Ali Mohamed, Noha Mansour Ryan, Hager Abdel Ghani Gad, Mahmoud Saad Gamal and Yousra Muhamed El-Baha (Egypt)



2nd prize: Avneesh Tiwari – atArchitecture, Gurjit Singh Matharoo - Matharoo Associates, Neha Rane – atArchitecture and Jain Savi Sanjay Vimmi - Matharoo Associates (India)

Competition Organiser

Tomaz Kancler

Piazza Transalpina / Trg Evrope Square Competition (2020)
Slovenia / Italy
Open project & ideas competition
210 registered participants
56 submitted projects from 18 countries



Why did you choose to organise a competition?

The city of Nova Gorica (Slovenia) was selected as the 2025 European Capital of Culture (ECoC), presenting its cross-border cooperation with neighbouring Gorizia (Italy) as one of its advantages. The two cities are going to prepare a joint programme to both promote and strengthen the resources of this unique cross-border area.

The internxational competition addressed the problem of uniting a city once divided by a border, which no longer exists as a physical barrier in today’s EU. Due to these new conditions, great opportunities for joint collaboration and cohesion in the border area arose. The title is an opportunity to connect all these factors and become a place of interest, looking for tradition and modernity, originality and visibility. Because of all this, we decided to organise an international competition with the collaboration of the UIA.

What were the biggest challenges you encountered?

The complex scenario of spatial development of ECoC GO 2025 has been worked out as a fundamental part, starting point and framework for the redevelopment of the city. This is considered as the opportunity for Nova Gorica (and Gorizia) to show its cultural pulse and cultural development. The challenge, above all, was to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of the city and its wider surroundings. It is a unique opportunity to integrate all the potentials of border towns and areas through cultural engagement in tourism, economy, education and infrastructure. This will increase and enable a new and better quality of life.

What were the lessons learned for future competitions?

Architectural competitions require diligence and trust, and, in return, bring the client a high-quality project and competent partners for planning and execution. Architectural design competitions are based primarily on quality and contribute to the creation of quality architecture. They are the basis for building culture and cannot be replaced by any other procedure.

Investors thus have the opportunity to build on the knowledge of different design approaches, with the participation of an expert jury that identifies the best, most appropriate solution for a particular task. The result is significantly higher conceptual and design maturity of projects.

What did UIA endorsement bring to you?

The purpose of the competition, contracted by the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation GO, organised by the Municipalities of Nova Gorica and Gorizia and endorsed by the UIA, was to acquire the most suitable proposal of a comprehensive design solution to plan the Europe square and the most suitable design project solution of an EPICenter on the site. It also achieved a wider, comprehensive perspective for changing the urban design of the cities of Nova Gorica and Gorizia.

The result of the competition provides an answer to the necessity and justification of conducting an international architectural competition for obtaining solutions. The UIA became the transmitter of our wishes to the international community of architects.

Tomaz Kancler was the Competition Manager for the urban regeneration project linking the Slovenian city, Nova Gorica with the Italian city of Gorizia, creating a shared central area to be known as Europe Square – Piazzale Della Transalpina and the hub EPICenter. More about the competition: <https://bit.ly/uia-piazza-transalpina>



1st prize: Studio Associato di Architettura Baglivo Negrini (Italy)



2nd prize: Paul Vincent and étude Anthony Benarroche architecte (France)



3rd prize: SADAR+VUGA d.o.o. (Slovenia)

Juror
Raya Ani

Competition for the Reconstruction & Rehabilitation of
Al Nouri Complex (2020) - Mosul, Iraq
Open project competition
666 registered participants
122 submitted projects from 57 countries



How would you define your role and responsibility being the jury president?

My first responsibility as the Jury President was to visit the site of the competition, though it was not a requirement due to the pandemic, but visiting the site was critical to ensuring a full understanding of the context. I again reviewed the architectural brief and the evaluation criteria of the competition and discussed certain aspects with the organisers and the experts. Then I carefully studied the UIA guidelines for competitions, which was quite a detailed document.

I requested a meeting with UIA International Competitions Commission Co-directors to go over the Guidelines and discuss the specifics of the competition. Then I had a meeting with the jurors to discuss the process and get their input, later creating a detailed agenda for the jury process based on the discussions, UIA guidelines and the number of entries received.

Before the start of the jury process, I asked the jurors once again to review the architectural brief and the evaluation criteria. During the jury process, my role was to ensure that all jury members were able to perform their role effectively and that their comments and questions were honoured. It is also my responsibility to facilitate open discussions to build consensus during the process so that all entries are fairly and objectively reviewed to determine the winners.

What advice would you give to competition organisers and jury members?

Time is always a challenge and allocating enough time is very critical to the success of the process. Competition organisers need to plan it comfortably time-wise to absorb any unforeseen circumstances. Jurors need to allow enough time to study the architectural brief thoroughly, then to review it again and to ask questions whenever needed. Having competent, objective and experienced jurors, who can dedicate their time without distraction is critical. It is also important to have a fair and experienced jury president who is a trusted leader committed to effectively and fairly leading and managing the jury process. Flexibility and adaptability are critical aspects of any jury process, as we need at times to customise the process early on, based on the unique situation of each competition.

What was your experience in the jury of an UIA endorsed competition?

Although I have been a juror of many international competitions over the years, this was the first time I was a juror for an UIA-endorsed competition. I believe the UIA clearly has many years of experience endorsing competitions, thus they have gained valuable experience in managing them. This gives assurance and inspires confidence in the jury process, as their established guidelines and recommendations provide a good framework from which to work. I believe meeting with UIA International Competitions Commission Co-Directors to discuss the jury process for this competition was a positive experience, as we collectively were able to address the specifics and the challenges of a jury process during an unusual time.

Raya Ani is the Founder and Design Director, RAW-NYC Architects (USA). She was the jury president for the **International Architecture Competition for the Reconstruction & Rehabilitation of Al Nouri Complex in Mosul, Iraq**. This competition was conducted with the support of the Government of United Arab Emirates, the Prime Minister of Iraq and the UN Secretary-General.
More about the competition: <https://bit.ly/uia-al-nouri>



3rd prize: Francisco Javier Maroto Ramos - ETSAM. UPM, Pedro García Martínez, Alberto Palomino Bueno, Maribel Sánchez Fernández, Rocío Sánchez Córcoles, Manuel Albaladejo Garre, Francisco Jesús Aparicio Buendía, and Jonathan Andrés Ríos Armijos (Spain)



4th prize: Wonne Ickx, Carlos Bedoya, Victor Jaime, Abel Perles – PRODUCTORA (USA and Mexico) with Architects: PRODUCTORA + Asli Cicek, Andrea Monroy, Diana Fonseca, Sofia Valdovinos, Ruy Berumen, Ana Reed, Erik Castaneda, Yael Saadia, Diego Velazquez, Pablo Manjarrez, Fidel Fernandez



5th prize: Clement Blanchet Architecture (UAE and France) with Clotilde Berrou & Marc Kauffman, Mattia Malavenda, Hellen Almoustafa Christina Chelarescu, Lola Garcia, Philippe Gimet, Fabrice Merizzi, Simon Parilla, Camille Pepin, Romain Ricciotti, Samir Nicolas Saddi, Shantanu Sang, Philippe Sarfati, Isabelle-Camille Tertrais, Pierre-Mary Thibault, Angelo Trinca, Yves Ubelmann and Patrycja Wyparlo.

Juror Sara Martín Cámara

Arxellence2 - Competition for the Design of the New Central Business District of Thessaloniki, Greece (2020)

Open ideas competition

1464 registered participants from 90 countries

173 submitted projects



How would you define your role and responsibility being a juror?

The architectural competition is a cultural asset. Each competition is an opportunity to redefine the role of architecture within the evolution of society. Therefore, it is a big responsibility and an honour to be part of a jury.

As a juror, selecting a project for a specific site and programme is a process that involves several elements: thinking about the question, creating a debate, exchanging points of view, taking part in a thinking group that has to make a final choice. If the right environment is achieved, the winning project will come out progressively and naturally from the thinking group.

What advice would you give to competition organisers and jury members?

I am convinced of the benefits of open procedure as the best tool for improving the architectural debate and the built environment. By choosing an open procedure, an organiser shows a will for equality and also a will for good architecture. For the architects, an open procedure allows the younger generations to bring forward innovative ideas and gives them the chance to start their practice.

Jurors have the responsibility of choosing the best project and also the responsibility of being absolutely exemplary in their ethics and professionalism. Architects who submit a proposal need the assurance that the whole process will be perfectly fair and honestly managed. Trust has to be carefully maintained.

What was your experience as a juror in an UIA-endorsed competition?

I had a very positive experience as a juror in a UIA competition. It was an ideas competition for a very large-scale reflection. The jury was very international and so were the proposals, coming from many different countries.

I found the openness created by the multicultural approach of the jury very appropriate for an ideas competition. We managed to create a group atmosphere during the three days we spent together, the exchanges were very rich and I think we managed to make the good choices.

This jury made me realise that architectural qualities have a global value and that we can easily find a common choice, even when we come from all over the world.

Sara Martín Cámara is the Founder of FRES architects and was a jury member for the ArXellence 2, an international ideas competition for the Design of the New Central Business District of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Her firm received the 2nd prize for the Vilnius National Concert Hall competition.

More about the competition: <https://bit.ly/uia-arxellence2>



1st prize: ALE Studio
(Spain)



2nd prize: Angeliki Tzifa
and Sophia Nikolaidou
(USA)



3rd prize: Mogan
Architecture (Netherlands)

Juror Kasper Guldager Jensen

Arxellence2 - Competition for the Design of the New Central Business District of Thessaloniki, Greece (2020)

Open ideas competition

1464 registered participants from 90 countries

173 submitted projects



How would you define your role and responsibility being the jury president?

My role as jury president was primarily to steer the evaluation process and recognise the right and most relevant project by establishing an overview and developing an understanding of all relevant details. The responsibility for the entire team is huge. Our work, choosing the winning proposal, is of tremendous importance for the city and its inhabitants, to which is added the respect and consideration due to all the work and effort behind all the authors' proposals.

What advice would you give to competition organisers and jury members?

My advice is to remember that a jury process is both thorough and concentrated work, as well as teamwork by a new group of individuals, so remember to allow the work to also be personal and a learning experience for the entire team. Despite having to make a virtual jury session due to the Covid pandemic, we all ended up quite close and established trust with each other.

What was your experience in the jury of an UIA endorsed competition?

My jury experience was clearly shaped by the democratic values of the UIA. The collaboration was truly unique. We made an effort to ensure that all elements of the work were carried out with respect for all opinions and we always had time for discussion. A very present and productive working climate. Also, the international composition of the jury gave many interesting and diverse cultural perspectives.

Kasper Guldager Jensen is the Co-founder of Home Earth. He was the jury president for the ArXellence 2, an international ideas competition for the Design of the New Central Business District of Thessaloniki, Greece.

He was also part of the winning team (3XN Architects, Denmark) for the competition for the design of the headquarters for the International Olympic Committee organised in 2013 and officially opened in 2019.

More about the competition: <https://bit.ly/uia-arxellence2>



4th prize: Alberto Mizrahi, Guillermo Lesch, Osvaldo Alvarez Rojas, Valeria Franck, Federico Menichetti, Leticia Alfaro, Philippa Jane Page (France)



5th prize: Maria Chrysoula Akrivou, Antonis Athanasiou (Netherlands)



6th prize: BURA urbanism (Netherlands)

Juror Gundula Zach

National Concert Hall Competition (2019) - Vilnius, Lithuania

Open project competition

305 registered participants

248 submitted projects from 57 countries



How would you define your role and responsibility in the jury?

As a foreign professional, I brought a fresh look and an external viewpoint to the competition. As a long-term member of the Swiss Competitions Commission, I could support the jury with my experience in the organisation of a complex and challenging jury. With such experience, it is possible to concentrate on the projects and not get lost in formal or management problems.

What advice would you give to competition organisers and jury members?

In a serious competition, there should always be a pre-jury meeting before the launch of the competition - at least with one or two external jury members. This meeting should always include a visit to the competition site. The external and professional analysis helps to define the tasks and clarify questions of the competition.

A precise and convincing competition programme is the first step to a convincing and outstanding winning project.

There should be always enough flexibility in time and schedule to handle the unpredictable number of entries in open competitions.

It is also important to be realistic about the expected building costs.

What was your experience on the jury of an UIA endorsed competition?

The jury process was an extraordinary and challenging experience from the professional and personal perspective. I appreciated the impactful professional discussions with the other jury members and consider that the local organisation of international competitions gained a lot from the UIA, which was represented by Regina Gonthier. This experience was necessary for the successful result of the competition, especially given the high numbers of entries received.



2nd prize: Fres architects
and planners Laurent Gra-
vier+Sara Martin Camara
(France)



3rd prize: UAB PALEKO
ARCHSTUDIJA
(Lithuania)



Honourable mention:
Smar Architecture Studio,
Australia.

Competition winner
Bibliotheca Alexandrina (1989)
Snøhetta - Robert Greenwood

Open project competition
Egypt
1400 registered applicants from 77 countries
540 submitted projects from 44 countries



How would you describe your particular experience with an UIA competition?

A key concern when taking part in a design competition is understanding that the competition is well-formulated and well-organised. In our experience, UIA competitions are a guarantee that the process will be well-run, correctly adjudicated and that the interests of the competitors will be ensured. This was certainly the case with the competition for the Alexandria Library. In such a large and open international competition, the involvement of the UIA was key in ensuring the success of the competition and in building a robust and solid platform before embarking on the complex later stages of the project.

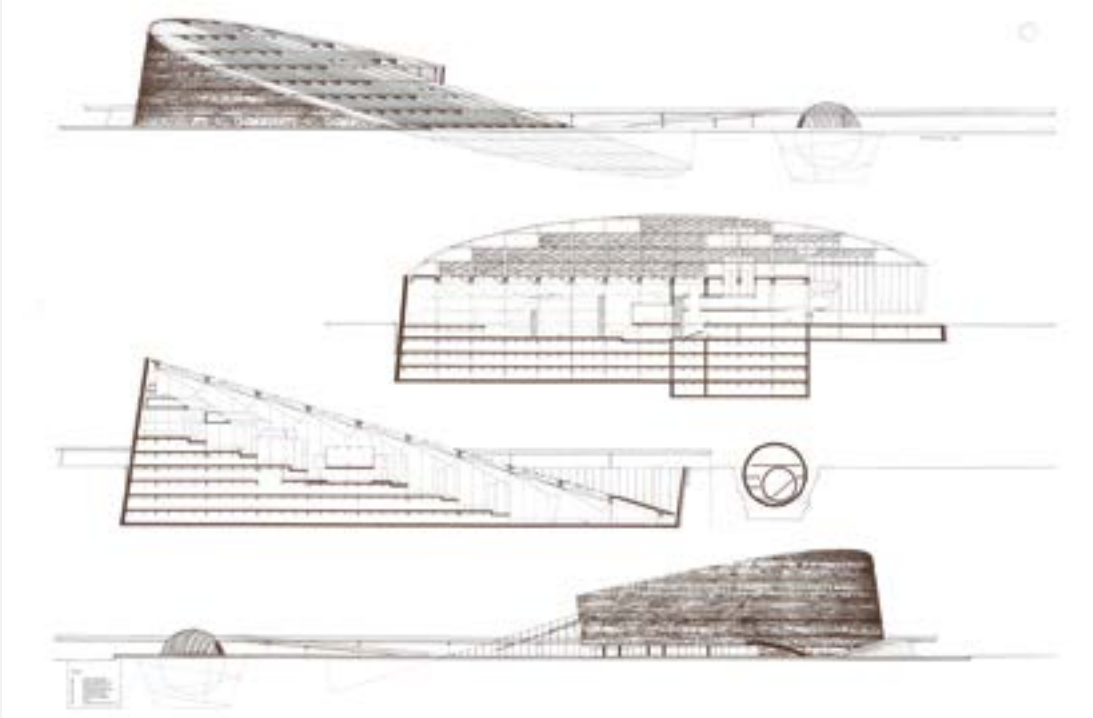
What value does the competition bring towards achieving outstanding design and how does it benefit society?

A well-run and well-adjudged competition is a compelling factor in securing both outstanding design and ultimately creating value and benefit for society. Establishing the key design factors and values already at the outset of the design process is a powerful tool to guide all stakeholders through the complex decision-making processes that ultimately results in the completed project.

What impact does a competition have on the further development of the project?
Does the winning project enjoy special handling in permit procedures or acceptance in its environment?

If the competition process is well founded in the community and due attention is given to public hearing and comment, then this can certainly strengthen the acceptance of the project. Likewise, if due care is taken to engage decisionmakers, stakeholders and authorities prior to the commencement of the design, then essential issues important for the ultimate permitting of the project should be anchored in the competition brief.

Robert Greenwood is the Partner and Managing Director (Asia) for Snøhetta. In 1989, the firm received first prize for an international competition to design the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Alexandria, Egypt. The 11-story library can contain up to 4 million volumes of books, and can be expanded up to 8 million by the use of compact storage. In addition to the library facilities, the library also contains other cultural and educational functions including a planetarium, several museums, a school for information science, and conservation facilities.
More about the competition: <https://snohetta.com/project/5-bibliotheca-alexandrina>



Competition winner
Bamiyan Cultural Centre (2015)
M2R Arquitectos Carlos - Nahuel Recabarren,
Manuel Alberto Martinez Catalan and Franco Morero

Open project competition
Afghanistan
1070 submitted projects from 117 countries



How would you describe your particular experience with an UIA competition?

The Bamiyan Cultural Centre competition was exceptionally well-organised and tremendously exciting. The opportunity of working on a world heritage site with a moving and tragic history, but with a bright future, was incredible. The quality of the brief and competition materials was key to properly understanding the place. Without such information, making an adequate project would have been impossible. The work of the judging panel was also outstanding given that they evaluated more than 1000 proposals.

What value does the competition bring towards achieving outstanding design and how does it benefit society?

The fact that an open international competition of that scale was done in such a transparent way allowed an open dialogue at the local level regarding the future of Bamiyan. The great variety of proposals presented gave the jury the chance to choose what they thought would be best for Bamiyan. Local people were aware of everything that was going on and could voice their opinions about the competition and the winning designs. Because of this, the local population was very welcoming of the resulting project.

What impact does a competition have on the further development of the project?
Does the winning project enjoy special handling in permit procedures or better acceptance in its environment?

The open, international competition was the backbone for being able to successfully complete the project. The immense international and local notoriety and support that this gave the resulting design really helped in carrying it forward with minimal difficulties, even in the challenging context of Afghanistan. Thanks to the involvement of the local people and the government in the competition, acceptance of the final project was immediate.

Carlos Nahuel Recabarren, Manuel Alberto Martinez Catalan and Franco Morero won an international competition organised by UNESCO to design the Bamiyan Cultural Centre in Afghanistan. The design, “Descriptive Memory: The Eternal Presence of Absence” was selected from 1070 submissions from 117 countries. The centre is situated on Chawni Hill, with a direct view across the Bamiyan Valley to the two Giant Buddha niches. It is not ‘built’ but rather ‘discovered’ by carving it out of the ground. This primordial architectural strategy creates a minimal negative impact building that fully integrates into the landscapes, takes advantage of the thermal inertia and insulation of the ground and acknowledges the local building traditions. Construction works began in the second half of 2016.
More about the competition: <https://bit.ly/ui-a-bamiyan-cultural-centre>



Exhibition hall



Competition winner National Concert Hall Competition (2019) Daniel Fraile Ortiz

Open project competition
Lithuania
305 registered applicants
248 submitted projects from 57 countries



How would you describe your particular experience with an UIA competition?

The architectural project is something that defines, models and specifies the landscape and shape of cities. Only from a deep reflection of the place will we be able to achieve the best results. The architectural competition is the best and most effective tool to obtaining a greater number of proposals and reflections and the UIA is the best guarantee of the success in the decision-making process.

Our experience has always been very positive. We have participated in various competitions organised by the UIA and the process is clear, transparent and fair. Without a doubt, it is the best guarantee to a brilliant result.

What value does the competition bring towards achieving outstanding design and how does it benefit society?

An anonymous competition, with a qualified jury and attractive financial compensation, is capable of mobilising the architectural community in an extraordinary way. It is difficult for any urban proposal to escape the problems posed when there is a high level of participation. The comparison of multiple proposals is undoubtedly the best contribution when seeking the greatest benefit for society and the best architectural design. The UIA stands for impartiality, quality in judgment and a powerful support in the further development of the project.

What impact does a competition have on the further development of the project? Does the winning project enjoy special handling in permit procedures or better acceptance in its environment?

The fact that the project is the result of an architectural competition gives the project a very solid basis in the negotiations concerning its further development. It also allows the authorities to have proven professional support to defend the project vis-a-vis the local population and architectural community. It undoubtedly allows for the proposal of new solutions and strategies within the existing rules and regulations and thus helps the evolution of architectural design.

Daniel Fraile Ortiz, Arquivio Architects (Spain) received first prize in the International architectural design competition for the National Concert Hall in Vilnius (Lithuania). In its report, the international jury lauded the first prize for the design of the three volumes and the new plaza that provides a clear and fitting intermediate level of detail between the city and the interior spaces. The winning architectural concept clarifies the site and is an outstanding and original design in terms of artistic expression. It will be a landmark and an attraction for Vilnius, the capital of the Republic of Lithuania and the hub of cultural life in Lithuania.

Arquivio Architects was contracted by the Vilnius municipality at the beginning of 2021.
More about the competition: <https://bit.ly/ui-a-national-concert-hall>



Competition winner

Piazza Transalpina / Trg Evrope Square Competition (2020)

Studio Negrini - Carmelo Baglivo and Laura Negrini

Open project & ideas competition
Slovenia / Italy
210 registered applicants from 18 countries
56 submitted projects



How would you describe your particular experience with an UIA competition?

I can say that I have found a detailed competition brief and a jury made up of qualified architects.

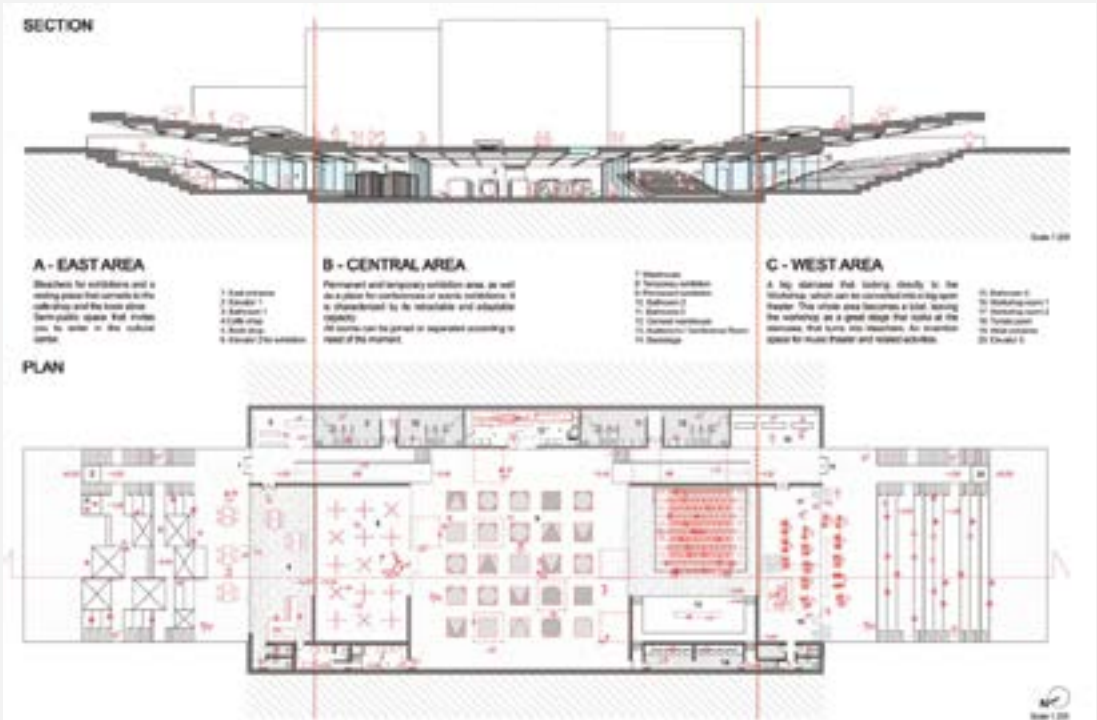
What value does the competition bring towards achieving outstanding design and how does it benefit society?

I think that the competition is a cultural tool which stays above any procedure. Every urban transformation must be defined through a competition with clear and simple procedures. For this reason, it is extremely important to ensure the clarity of the brief and the quality of the jury, which must be composed of architects with different specialisations and nationalities.

What impact does a competition have on the further development of the project? Does the winner project enjoy special handling in permit procedures? better acceptance in its environment?

A good brief can give you the certainty of having a good project as the winner. The role of the administration is very important for the success of the competition and for the project to be appreciated by the population. A good designer knows how to mediate in order to share architectural design under his/her control.

Carmelo Baglivo and Laura Negrini are the directors of BAN – Baglivo Negrini Architetti based in Rome, Italy. They received first prize for the urban regeneration project linking the Slovenian city, Nova Gorica with the Italian city of Gorizia, creating a shared central area to be known as Europe Square – Piazzale Della Transalpina and the hub EPICenter. The jury lauded the project for having a strong and clear visual impact, with a concave form that evokes a steady point of equilibrium. This simple, but significant gesture lends itself in its form to a naturally converging multifunctional space for social gathering - exalting its symbolic value, interpreting the memories still present and current, with an intervention that is open to the future. More about the competition: <https://bit.ly/uia-piazza-transalpina>



ENDORSED PROFESSIONAL COMPETITIONS

Open competitions

- Larissa Surrounding Area of the ancient theatre, Greece (ready to be launched)
- Reconstruction & Rehabilitation of Al Nouri Complex in Mosul, Iraq (2020)
- Arxellence2 - Design of the New Central Business District of Thessaloniki, Greece (2020)
- Piazza Transalpina / Trg Evrope Square (2020)
- National Concert Hall, Lithuania (2019)
- Knowledge and Innovation Center, Lebanon (2019)

Restricted competitions

- The European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC), Spain (ongoing)
- Thessaloniki ConfEx Park, Greece (ongoing)
- European Parliament Building, Belgium (ongoing)
- Tuchkov Buyan Park Competition in St. Petersburg, Russia (2020)
- New headquarters of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, Kuwait (2019)
- Loi 130 Competition in Brussels, Belgium (2019)

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