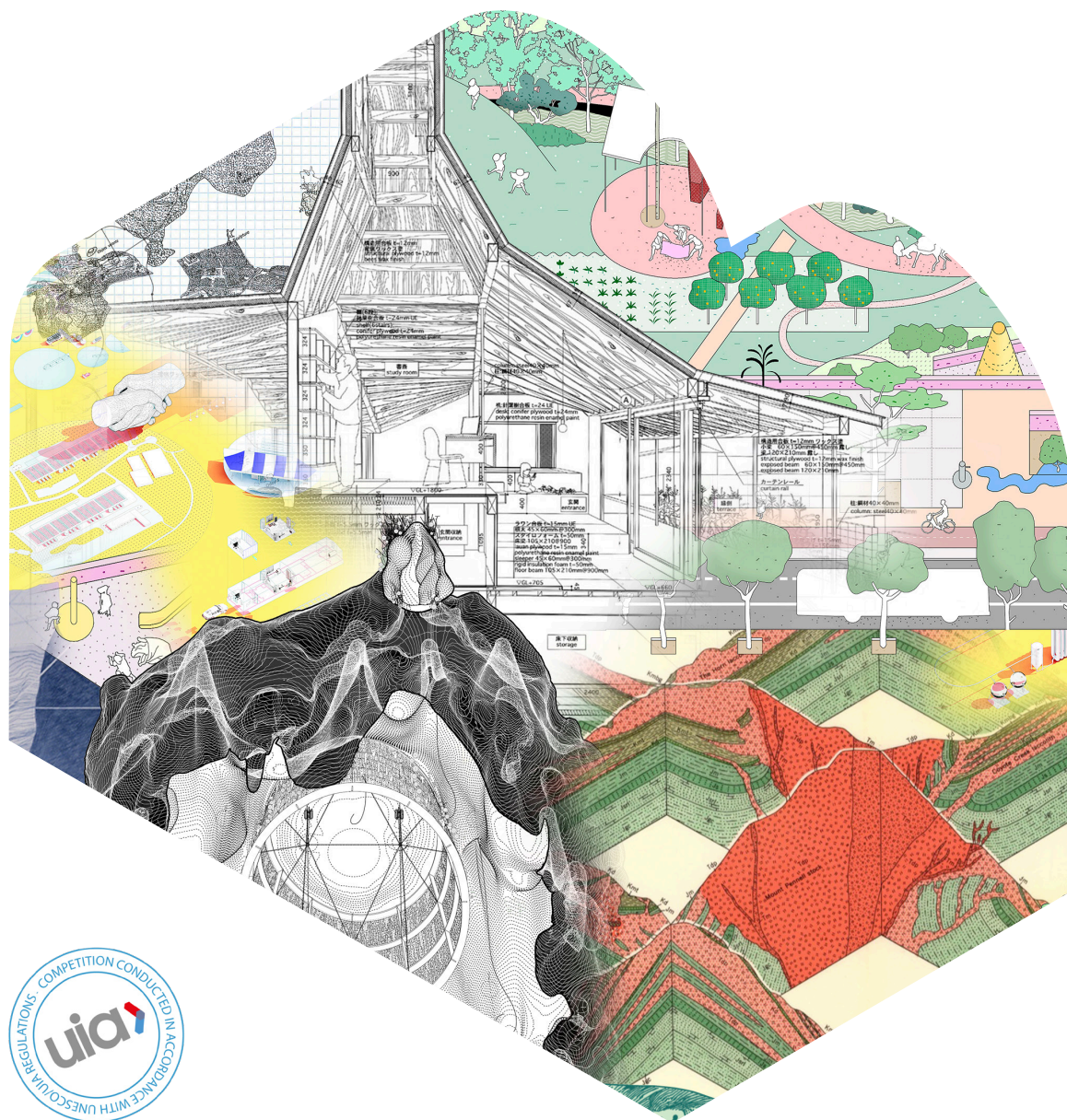


World Congress
of Architects.
Barcelona. UIA 2026.

Becoming.
Architectures for
a planet in transition.

Catalysts of Resilience

UIA International
Student Competition





World Congress
of Architects.
Barcelona. UIA 2026.

Becoming.
Architectures for
a planet in transition.

From 28 June
to 2 July.

Competition Organiser:

UIA World Congress 2026 organisation (CSCAE and COAC)

Participants:

Full-time registered students (individual or team) from all over the world.

Key dates:

15/07/2025, Competition launch

15/09/2025, Deadline for questions

24/09/2025, Deadline for answers

07/11/2025, Deadline for registrations

07/11/2025, Deadline for submission of entries

January 2026, Announcement of results

Convened



Organised by



arquitectes.cat

Funded by public administrations





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Introduction

The focus of this international student competition, *Catalysts of Resilience*, is to design spatial interventions that enable resistance and adaptation to predictable threats related to political shifts, social transformations, and climate change. The competition calls for design proposals that foster this capacity for resilience using time as a design tool.

This single-stage student ideas competition 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). The Competition Organiser is the UIA Barcelona 2026 Congress organisation (CSCAE and COAC). Javier Rodríguez and Cristina Guadalupe, from the Technical Secretariat of the UIA Barcelona 2026 Congress will serve as Technical Committee for the Competition.



Competition Brief

1. Overview

The competition invites students to engage with the theme *Catalysts of Resilience* by addressing vulnerable places at risk of future habitational discomfort, inequality or even collapse. Vulnerability may stem from various factors, such as global warming or rising sea levels in certain geographical locations, but it could also arise from issues like political conflict or economic pressures in socially tense areas, among other concerns. The goal is to propose interventions that anticipate and mitigate these challenges by fostering resilience and adaptation to protect and care for these vulnerable sites. This competition asks students to think beyond conventional design methods, using time as a design strategy to catalyse resilient futures.

2. The topic of Becoming

The competition topic aligns with the UIA World Congress 2026 central theme of *Becoming. Architectures for a planet in transition*. The topic of becoming explores spatial practices that use time as a design tool. Using time, in this architectural context, has the purpose of fostering careful processes of spatial appropriation and transformation. Far from the idea of *tabula rasa*, we suggest that spatial change should be rooted in preexisting physical and cultural places, engaging with a diversity of ecological, poetic, material, and political concerns. In the context of this competition, rather than proposing static projects, participants are encouraged to consider careful, time-based processes of transformation that respect and nurture the physical and cultural realities of the chosen site.

Further information about the theme *Becoming. Architectures for a planet in transition* can be accessed through the following link: <https://uia2026bcn.org>.

Fig. 1
Conceptual collage for
*Becoming. Architectures
for a planet in transition*.





3. Competition purpose	Participants should identify and creatively address sites predicted to face severe discomfort or collapse in the future —whether human or nonhuman— due to ecological, social, or material pressures. The main task is to design strategies that anticipate and mitigate these harmful consequences, helping these vulnerable places adapt and build resilience against predicted challenges. These contexts may include urban, suburban, or rural areas where failure may not result in absolute collapse but instead lead to fragile, partially damaged, and complex territories or cities, still retaining traces of hope for uplifted futures. The aim is to characterise these found vulnerable sites and design catalysts of resilience that foster transformation for eco-social betterment over time.
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4. Site selected by participants	Each participant or team will select a site that aligns with the competition's theme. This could be a local place familiar for the participants or a distant one they wish to investigate. The site should be critically analysed for its vulnerability and risk of collapse, as much as for its potential to explore <i>Catalysts of Resilience</i> . The first task of the competition consists of characterising (through a personal complex and rich drawing) a pre-existing situation, in order to represent the dormant potential of each proposal. Students must be aware that this representation of the place will be the only chance to introduce the site to the jury, before displaying their design proposals.
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Tip: Examples of situations

While the choosing of the site is free and is considered a relevant task in the competition, because it formulates critical questions beyond architectural answers, the following list provides examples of possible situations that participants could explore. This list is only provided to open possibilities, so students are free to follow one of these ideas, but are encouraged to discover other unexpected situations.

- A coastal region facing rising sea levels, heat waves, summer droughts, and winter floods, threatening settlements and ecosystems.
- An abandoned industrial site contains deteriorating structures and polluted land, disconnected from its surroundings.
- A rapidly urbanizing area losing its traditional construction knowledge, replaced by unsustainable building practices.
- A marginalized neighbourhood at risk of displacement due to gentrification and economic pressures.
- A logistics hub operating as a crucial link in global supply chains that, however, causes severe local environmental and economic disruption.
- A decayed mining town suffering from environmental degradation and economic collapse.

5. Using Time as a Design Strategy

The second task of the competition consists of designing and representing two scenarios of transformation of the site —short-term and long-term— where architectural catalysts of resilience are explored. For example, the first proposed scenario could be in 10 years' time, while the second in 100 years' time. Therefore, projects should not present a single, finalised solution, but rather develop dynamic strategies that unfold over time. The design process should include both short-term urgencies and long-term visions, avoiding overly rigid systems and fostering open-ended, adaptive approaches to spatial change. These strategies should incorporate infrastructural traces that, over time, could catalyse enhanced forms of habitation and coexistence.

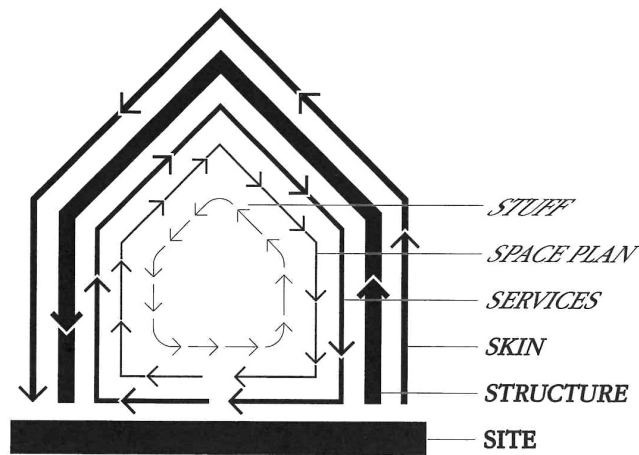


Fig. 2
Stewart Brand's "six S's".

Tip: Designing layers of different temporality at multiple scales

In order to unfold the temporal potential, projects could consider that the material layers of their proposal could last different spans of time. For instance, by following Stewart Brand's famous "six S's" we should not see buildings as homogeneous in time, but distinguish them (at least) between site, structure, skin, services, space-plan and stuff: each layer of different longevity, while emphasising that each one corresponds to different levels of agency —individual, group, community, public. This understanding of time, should be applied to any architectural, urban, or territorial project. In the context of this competitions, students can choose the scale of their intervention, engaging with temporal stratification from the scale of furniture to the scale of geological land-form.

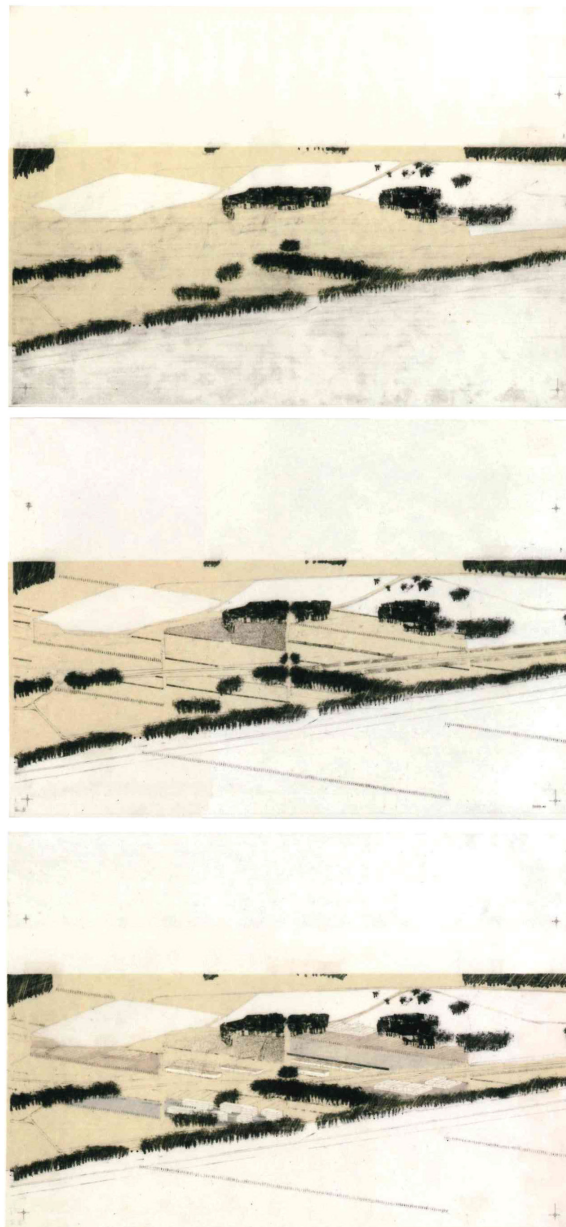
6. Research by Design

The projects in this competition should be understood as small design-driven investigations. This understanding of design goes beyond problem-solving, attempting to provide a wider architectural awareness that arises from the design process. According to this approach, where "getting hands-on with design" becomes a research tool, tacit knowledge embedded in practice gains value, allowing for qualitative, critical, and situated inquiry that integrates theory and practice. Design speculation becomes a means to interpret, test, and hypothesize unexpected spatial interactions: complex, transdisciplinary issues, prioritising relevance above verification, and opening new ways of bridging design wisdom and architectural research.

7. Drawing time and richness

Proposals should be represented through a sequence of 3 complex drawings (found sites, short-term proposals, and long-term developments). Each drawing should fill an entire horizontal A2 sheet. Participants should consider that the three A2 sheets will pile-up vertically, in a column of three drawings, depicting the passage of time. Each of these drawings should be produced as a complex, rich representation; perhaps even as a compound drawing informed by captions and diagrams —and yet keeping a certain unity as a document. While each drawing will depict a different temporal situation (current, short-term proposal, long-term proposal) additional movement or temporality may be included, as well as a variety of scalar representation. The drawings may employ representational techniques such as axonometric views, sectional perspectives, or hybrid visualization methods.

Fig. 3
Florian Beigel and
Philip Christou (ARU),
Stadtlandschaft
Lichterfelde Süd.





8. Project Deliverables

Submissions for the competition consists of three (3) digital A2 horizontal panels. Each panel must be submitted as a separate PDF file, compressed together in a ZIP folder, with a maximum total size of 30MB, according to the following criteria:

Panel 1: 1x A2 (horizontal): *Characterizing Found Sites*

- A single, rich drawing representing the identified site and its context, highlighting its vulnerabilities and threats, as well as the qualities of the place that may foster enhanced transformation.
- A 250-word text must be included in the document, detailing the site's characteristics, challenges, and potential for resilience. This text can either be divided into smaller sections accompanying different parts of the drawing or it can be kept as a single column.

Panel 2: 1x A2 (horizontal): *Short-term Proposed Transformation*

- A single, rich drawing representing the proposed transformation in a short-term scenario. This document should not only depict the envisaged scenario but also illustrate the time-based strategies that enhance resilience over time.
- A 250-word text should be included in the document, explaining the proposed short-term developments and their role as *Catalysts of Resilience*. This text can either be divided into smaller sections accompanying different parts of the drawing or it can be kept as a single column.

Panel 3: 1x A2 (horizontal): *Long-term Course of Becoming*

- A single, rich drawing representing the proposed transformation in a long-term scenario. This document should depict a “finalised” state but should illustrate the time-based strategies that enhance resilience over time, in the distant future.
- A 250-word text should be included in the document, explaining the long-term situation and the design of Catalysts of Resilience. This text can either be divided into smaller sections accompanying different parts of the drawing or it can be kept as a single column.

For more details see *Chapter 8. Deliverables of the Regulations section*.



9. Documents
available on the
competition website

Project documents:

- “Becoming. Architectures for a planet in transition”, conceptual brief in PDF. Also to be downloaded through this [link](#).

Administrative documents:

- Registration form

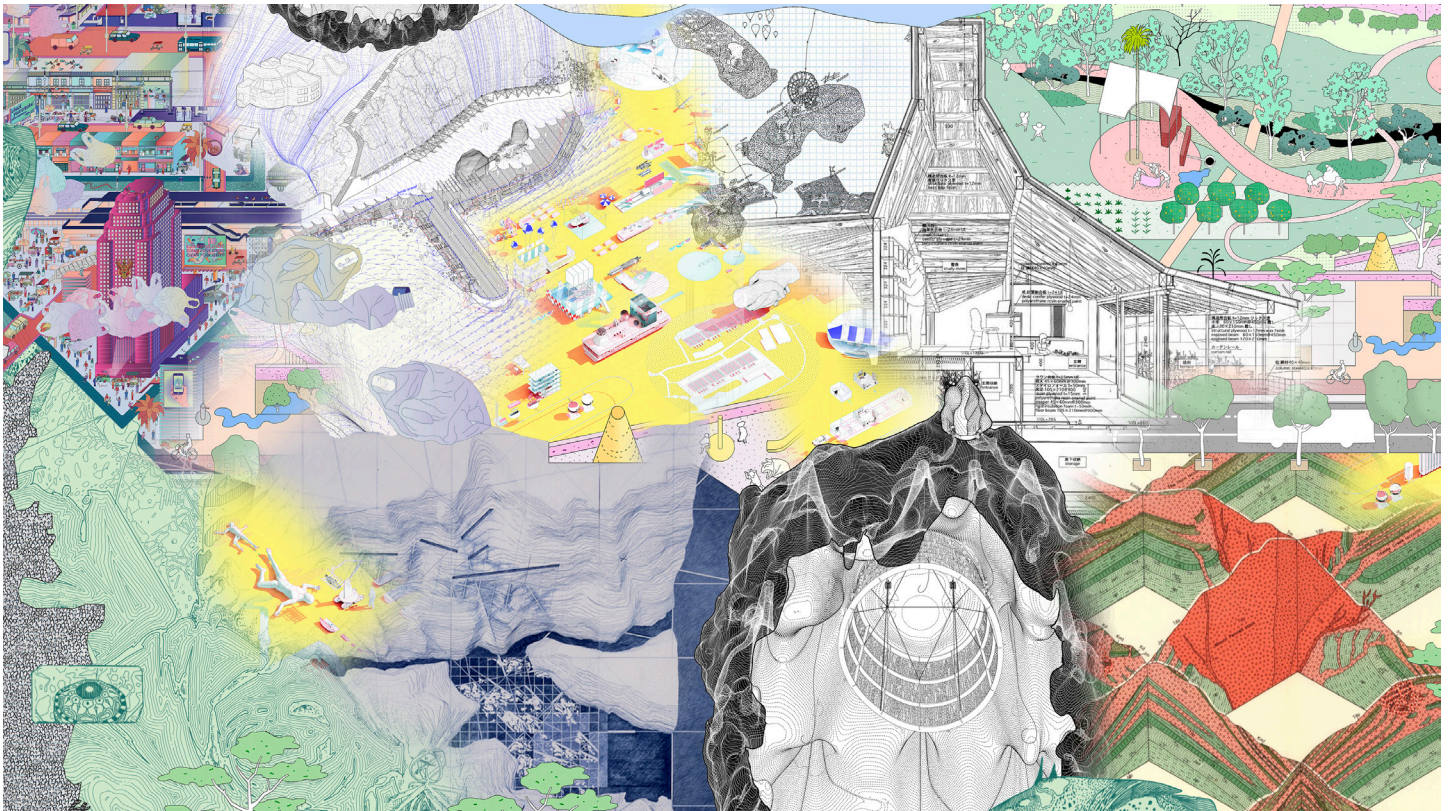


Fig. 4 Collage of digitally manipulated images by Judit Musachs and Pol Pérez selected by the curatorial team. Images captioned clockwise: Bangkok Opportunistic Ecologies, drawing by Animal Domestic; Reino Mineral, drawing by Lluís Alexandre Casanovas;

Closer Each Day: The Architecture of Everyday Death for The Canadian Centre for Architecture, drawing by Comon Accounts; Athens By Hills, drawing by Point Supreme; Nora House, drawing by Atelier Bow-wow; P.A.R.C, drawing by Adrià Escolano & David Steegman;

Isometric Fence Mount Fenell 1950; Phyla, drawing by TAKK; Jardins Elementaires, Villa Medici, drawing by Michel Desvigne; Cover from Athenian Primitivism, drawing by Al White.



Regulations

1. Eligibility

The competition is open to any full-time registered students (individual or team) from all over the world. Multidisciplinary teams are encouraged. Only students of architecture, landscape architecture, urban design or urban planning can register as authors or co-authors. Students from other disciplines can register as collaborators. The participants can't be accompanied by tutors/teachers.

All participants must be enrolled as students at the time of proposal submission. Teams may have from 1 to 5 students. Competitors are only allowed to participate in one team. Students, associates, employees and family members of jury members and persons involved in the preparation of this competition are not allowed to participate in the competition.

2. Jury

The following international jury will evaluate the entries:

Jury members:

- Tatiana Bilbao (Mexico)
- Josep Ferrando (Spain), acting as jury chair
- Marianna Rentzou from Point Supreme (Greece)
- Sumayya Vally from Counterspace, UIA representative (South Africa)
- Wtanya Chanvitan from Bangkok Tokyo Architecture (Tokio and Bangkok)

Alternate Jurors:

- Alternate Juror 1: Donn Holohan from Superposition (China)
- Alternate Juror 2: Alejandro Vargas Marulanda from Entropía, UIA representative (Colombia)

Professional Curatorial Advisors:

- Maria Giramé, UIA World Congress of Architects 2026 Barcelona Curator
- Mariona Benedito, UIA World Congress of Architects 2026 Barcelona Curator

UIA Observer:

- Doris Wälichli (Switzerland), Architect and ICC Advisor

Technical Committee:

- Javier Rodríguez, Technical Secretariat of the UIA Barcelona 2026 Congress
- Cristina Guadalupe, Technical Secretariat of the UIA Barcelona 2026 Congress



3. Prizes

The prizes awarded will be as following:

- 1st prize 5000€ and a certificate
- 2nd prize 4000€ and a certificate
- 3rd prize 3000€ and a certificate
- 4th prize 2000€ and a certificate
- 5th prize 1000€ and a certificate

The jury may also allocate honourable mentions up to five maximum, as well as a list of finalist proposals. No ex aequo prizes will be awarded. Prizes will be paid within 30 days after the announcement of the winners. Winners will have free access to the Congress and all travel expenses covered. Winners, honorable mentions and finalist proposals will be part of an exhibition during the Congress.

4. Calendar

Timelines to consider:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| • 15/07/2025 | Competition launch |
| • 15/09/2025 | Deadline for questions |
| • 24/09/2025 | Deadline for answers |
| • 07/11/2025 | Deadline for registrations |
| • 07/11/2025 | Deadline for submission of entries |
| • November 2025 | Jury meeting and evaluation of entries |
| • January 2026 | Announcement of results |
| • Congress days | Exhibition |
| • Congress days | Award ceremony |

5. Official language

The official language of the competition is English. Entries must be submitted in the official language.

6. Registration

Participants will be required to register on the official competition website (www.uia-competitions.org).

Competitors will receive a number or code that they will use to log into the system and access to the Q&A private area. No fees are required for registering. Further team members can be added after registration is closed. The team leader cannot be changed.

Registration will request following information:

- Name of author/team representative
- Name of team members (if any)
- Name of academic institution with year of registration
- Country
- Email address
- Check box to confirm that the participant meets the eligibility criteria

Once registration is completed, each registered applicant will receive a secret random User Identification Number generated by the system. This number will be sent to the applicant via email. The same information will be then sent to a dedicated email address owned by the UIA. The system will store this information and keep it not accessible until



after the Jury has appointed the winning entries. This e-mail system is managed by a third-party company. Nobody will be able to access the data until the email account will be assigned to a user once the jury has signed the results thus allowing access to the information.

7. Questions and
answers

Questions will be continuously answered until the indicated deadline. Only registered students or teams can ask questions. Conditions and requirements will not be modified after the deadline for answers.

8. Deliverables

a. Project deliverables

Submissions for the competition consists of three (3) digital A2 horizontal panels. Each panel must be submitted as a separate PDF file, compressed together in a ZIP folder, with a maximum total size of 30MB, in accordance with the criteria stated in *Chapter 8. Project deliverables of the Competition Brief* section.

Project documents must be submitted anonymously and not bear any indication of the authors. All entries should only indicate the registration code provided by the competition organisers, located on the top right side of each panel, as well as the identification of each panel (panel 1, 2 or 3).

b. Authors identification

Form including the name of the authors, the leader/contact person and contact e-mail. The effective composition of the author team may differ from registration including more team members. The main registered competitor must still be member of the team. This form should include the declaration that the competitor is the author of the entry.

9. Submission
and Anonymity

All entries should only indicate the registration code provided by the competition organisers. Participants must ensure anonymity while submitting their entries. The name of the competitors (students, tutor, schools and their countries) should not be indicated on any part of the submitted material. The submitted files must not display the author's, collaborators (only students allowed), course's or university's name or logo, nor signature of drawings that would allow the identification of the entry.

Submission process:

- After submission is completed, the applicant will receive a confirmation email.
- The competition platform is specially constructed ensuring anonymity of the competitors throughout the whole procedure.
- Following the submission deadline, the competition organiser will be able to download the totality of the PDF files submitted by the competition participants.
- It will not be possible to modify the submission once it is submitted.

In case of technical issues, applicants can contact the UIA Secretariat via competitions@uia-architectes.org. Technical support does not impact anonymity.



10. Reasons for
Disqualification

Factors that will lead to disqualification:

- Entries submitted after the deadline
- Entries that do not respect the conditions for anonymity
- Entries that violate authors rights of third parties

Entries that do not meet the requirements set forth in this document or that contain any kind of irregularity shall be indicated to the Jury by the Technical Committee. The Jury shall decide whether to disqualify the entry, registering the decision in the Report of the Jury Decision.

11. Evaluation

a. Preliminary Examination

The entries submitted will be examined by the Technical Committee, in order to assess their compliance with the submission rules before being formally delivered to the jury at the beginning of the evaluation procedure.

The entries will be checked to ensure the following:

- Submission of the entry until the deadline
- Compliance with the formal requirements
- Completeness of the requested deliverables and the project presentation

b. Evaluation process

The evaluation process will be conducted in successive rounds. In the initial stage, all eligible submissions will be reviewed, and entries that fail to meet fundamental requirements will be withdrawn. The jury will then conduct a comparative assessment of the remaining proposals, evaluating them based on the defined criteria while allowing flexibility in interpretation.

Through structured discussions, the jury will progressively refine the selection, ensuring that the winning entries demonstrate a strong conceptual foundation, relevance to the competition theme, and innovative design strategies. The final decision will be documented in the *Report of the Jury Decision*. The jury will meet in a meeting conducted in form of interactive video conference. At the evaluation session, the jury will look at and discuss all entries and evaluate them according to the set criteria.

c. Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria are defined in relation to the competition's core task and are formulated to allow flexibility in interpretation. The jury will take a holistic approach, considering the depth, coherence, and transformative potential of each proposal.

The criteria, in no particular order of importance, include:

- Relevance to the theme: Alignment with *Catalysts of Resilience* and the use of time as a design tool.
- Site analysis and context: Depth of understanding of the site's vulnerabilities, potential, and cultural/ecological layers.
- Innovation and adaptive strategies: Creativity and effectiveness in proposing time-based, resilient interventions.
- Clarity and communication: Strength of narrative and effectiveness of visual representation.
- Scalability and impact: Consideration of multiple scales and long-term transformative potential.



12. Jury decision	<p>Jury decisions are taken by majority vote. The jury decisions are sovereign, binding both for the organiser and the competitors, irrevocable and unappealable.</p> <p>The mere submission of an entry implies tacit acceptance by the competitor of all conditions and rules outlined in these regulations and the results of the competition.</p>
13. Copyright / Authors' rights	<p>The authors will retain their copyright and right to publish their projects. No design, whether or not awarded a prize, may be used wholly or in part by the competition organisers or third parties without the explicit agreement of its author.</p> <p>By submitting an entry competitors guarantee that they are the authors of the project.</p>
14. Publication rights	<p>The UIA, the competition organiser and the competitors have the right to publicise competition entries, provided that the authors and the organisers are duly mentioned. 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. Competitors are not allowed to publish their projects before the competitions results are officially announced, or it will imply automatic disqualification of the competition.</p>
15. Announcement of winners	<p>All prize winners will be informed by e-mail.</p> <p>The announcement of the result will be published on the UIABCNWC26 Congress web site, as well as the UIA website and all related social media platforms at the date indicated in <i>Chapter 4. Calendar of the Regulations section</i>. The jury report documenting the jury's decision and including critiques of the prize-winning projects and honourable mentions shall be made available online on the competition web-site after the date of the announcement of the results.</p>
16. Exhibition	<p>The award ceremony will take place during the Congress dates (from 28 June to 2 July 2026), more details to be confirmed. Winners, honorable mentions and finalist proposals will be part of an exhibition during the Congress. In addition, winning entries will be displayed online on the UIABCNWC26 Congress web site, as well as the UIA website and all related social media platforms.</p>



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Credits

Curators “Becoming. Architectures for a planet in transition.”

Pau Bajet

Mariona Benedito

Maria Giramé

Tomeu Ramis

Pau Sarquella

Carmen Torres

Contact

uia-competitions.org

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competitions@uia-architectes.org

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