

The Alt Urban Campaign is the Development Alternatives Group's flagship initiative to create cities that are healthy, inclusive, and regenerative.

The Alt Urban Housing Challenge is launched by TARA, a social enterprise of the DA Group, in partnership with the Dhun Life Project to support the campaign's mission of enabling one million green homes by 2030.

Visit the Alt Urban [website](#) for more details.

All pictures in this document are courtesy the Dhun Life Project.

Ready to Redefine Housing?



Bring Your Vision to Life
Opportunity to get your design built in a real-world housing project



Win Big
Earn up to INR 5 Lakh and leave a lasting mark on sustainable architecture



Exclusive Learning
Learn from industry experts and gain invaluable insights into sustainable design



Jaipur Design Meet
Exclusive event at the project site with exciting workshops, peer knowledge-sharing sessions, and a unique cultural experience



Networking & Partnerships
Opportunity to make meaningful connections to collaborate with industry leaders



Global Recognition
Showcase your talents at the global Alt Urban Summit

A bright yellow bird with a dark beak is perched on a thorny branch. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural, outdoor setting. The bird is facing right, and its feathers are a vibrant yellow, contrasting with the darker branches and green foliage.

Housing Redefined: A Call to Create

A home is where the heart resides, embodying dreams, echoing cultural values, and bridging the gap between personal and social identity. Today, the concept of '**home**' has transformed. In a world facing increasing environmental challenges and the pressures of modern urban life, housing must now consider the well-being of both society and the planet. The true essence of housing goes beyond walls and roofs. It's about creating spaces that nurture, inspire, and sustain.

This year's theme for Development Alternatives' Alt Urban campaign is 'Housing Redefined', and we are delighted to host the global Alt Urban Housing Challenge in partnership with the [Dhun Life Project](#). This competition offers a unique opportunity to Re-imagine Housing and invites innovative design and planning solutions to shape a township on the outskirts of Jaipur, Rajasthan

Dhun Life is not just another development — it's a laboratory for the future of housing in India. We are seeking visionary architects and designers to craft solutions that aim for the highest standards of environmental harmony, community well-being, and efficiency. The winning design will not only be a symbol of innovation but will also become a working reality, implemented in the Dhun Life Project.

Join us in shaping a new era of housing—where homes are more than buildings, and communities thrive in spaces designed for the future.

Open to Innovators Worldwide

The competition is open to all. Architects, planners, designers, engineers, artists, and enthusiasts, all are invited.

Participants can enter individually or in a team. **All submissions must be original, in English, and each participant or team can submit only one entry.**

Celebrating Winners

The team with the best design will be rewarded with **INR 5,00,000**.

Two standout entries will be rewarded with **INR 1,00,000** each.

The winners get a chance to collaborate directly with the developer to bring their masterpiece to life. These awards are more than just prizes; they are gateways to new horizons to nurture thought leaders who will build the cities of tomorrow.

How it Works

You can secure your spot by registering at the [link](#) here. Please be sure to have your payment receipt handy for completing registration.

The deadline for the close of registrations and submission of concept proposals is **17 January 2025**. Register by **15 December 2024** to secure an early bird discount. Shortlisted candidates will be given six weeks from the announcement of results to submit their detailed design proposals.

The competition follows a two-stage process:

1

Submission of Concept Proposal

Shortlisted participants come together at Jaipur Design Meet for site visits, co-learning, sessions and a cultural retreat.

2

Submission of Detailed Proposal

Competition results will be announced at the Alt Urban Global Summit in Delhi. Shortlisted participants also get a chance to exhibit their work at the summit

Registration Fee

Indian Nationals

Early Bird Registration: INR 12,000 +18% GST

Standard Registration: INR 15,000 +18% GST

Foreign Nationals

Early Bird Registration: USD 250 + 18% GST

Standard Registration: USD 300 + 18% GST

Registration gives all participants access to an enriching series of dialogues and training programs designed to elevate your design journey. One representative from each team also gets free access to the Alt Urban Summit in Delhi

Please note

1. *GST and applicable taxes will be charged in addition to the registration fees mentioned above.*
2. *For group and individual discounts, please contact us directly.*
3. *The registration fee is non-refundable. All travel costs related to site visits, summits, or any competition-related events will be borne by the participants.*
4. *The developer retains the right to engage architects at their discretion. The architectural fee and any further collaboration will be subject to a separate agreement and terms mutually acceptable between the selected team and the developer.*
5. *Shortlisted teams may be required to submit team profiles to showcase their team strength and project delivery capabilities in Stage 2.*



The Project

About Dhun: Alt-Urban Vision for Future Living

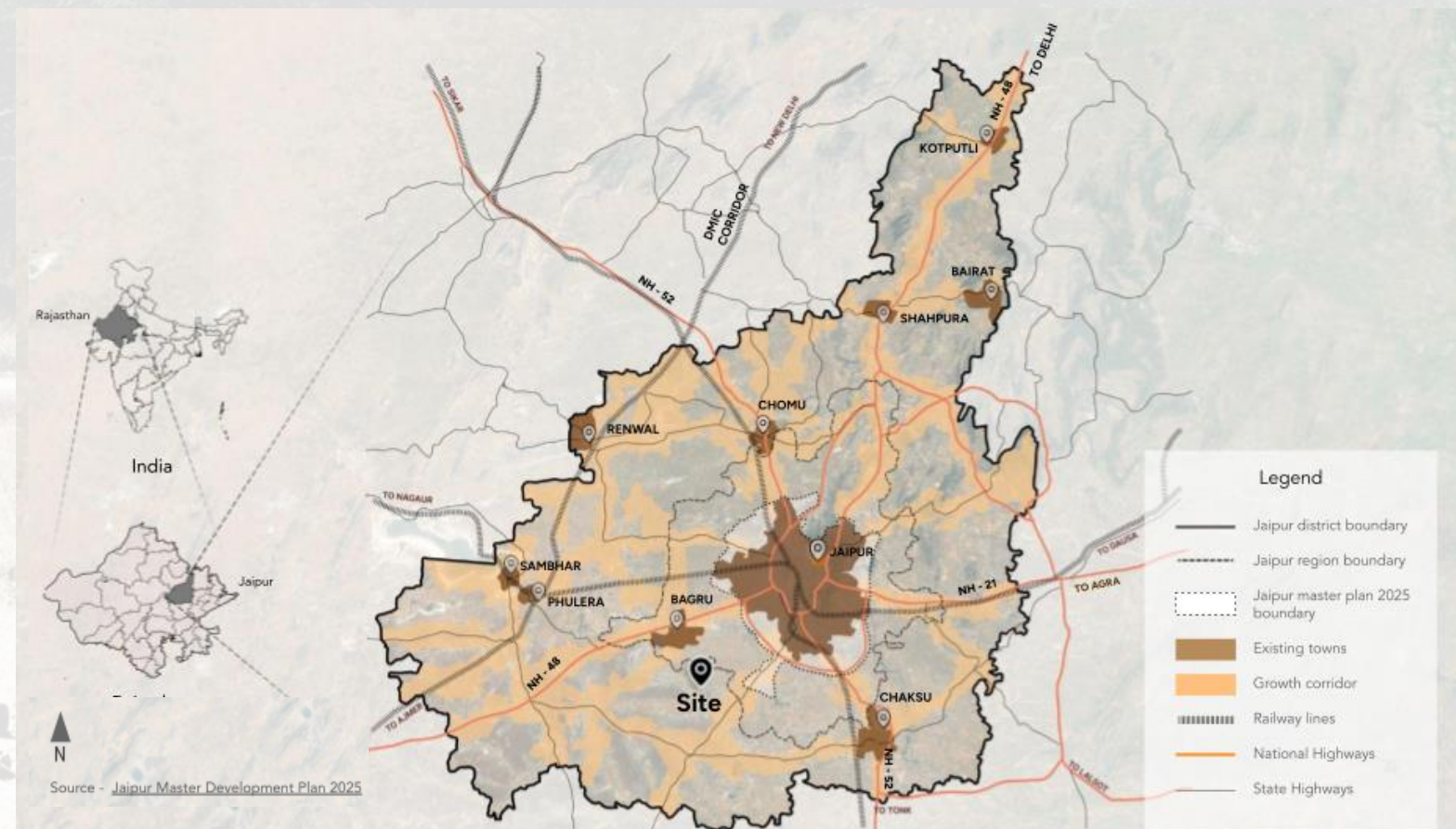
Dhun was born from a simple yet powerful vision for future living: to create an urban habitat where architecture and life coexist harmoniously with nature. A place shaped by respect for natural resources, thoughtful systems, and a deep sense of community.

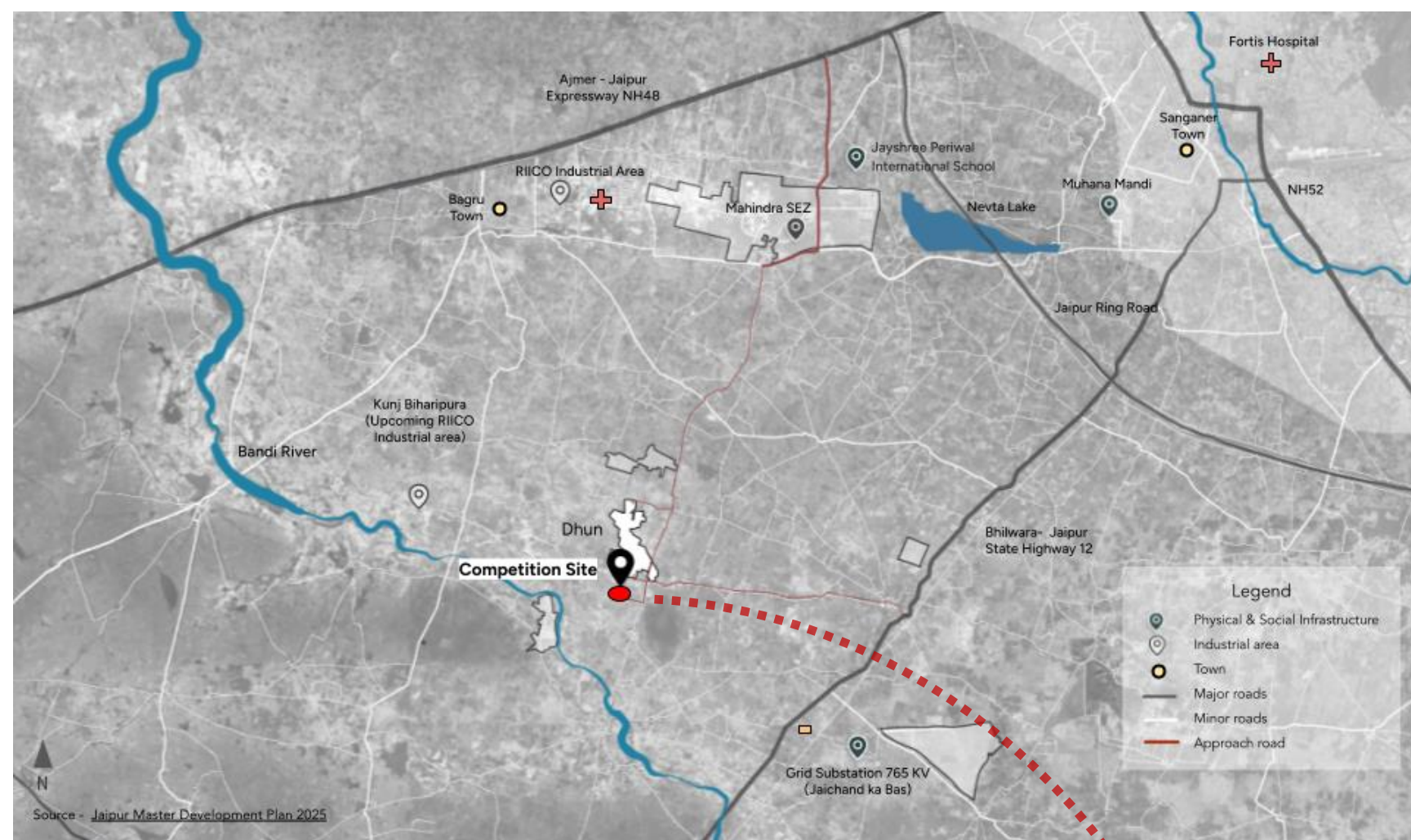
The journey started in 2012 near Jaipur, where Dhun has revived a degraded landscape, reclaiming it by 2020. Today, over 2 lakh trees thrive, food forests flourish, and restored water bodies capture 4 million litres of rainwater annually. Dhun is home to 140+ species of birds, with the rare and vulnerable all thriving in this renewed ecosystem. Learn about DHUN's journey [here](#).

Along the way, collaborations with passionate individuals have woven together expertise in ecology, sustainable building practices, water conservation, and holistic wellness, forming a rich tapestry of knowledge that guides Dhun's every step. Dhun's commitment doesn't stop at the land—it extends to the next generation, nurturing a spirit of curiosity and innovation in children through a reimagined approach to education.

Set in the heart of the Jaipur region, Dhun's 500-acre township envisions a community of 10,000 residents where working, learning, and leisure blend seamlessly. Responsible architecture meets innovative design, creating a space where residents can not only live but also explore their potential and engage deeply with their environment.

Dhun's foundation is built on environmental stewardship, placing nature, community, and individual well-being at the core of its values. It is more than a place to live—it's a place to grow, thrive, and reimagine what urban living can be. Dhun's commitment extends beyond the present, with research that explores the historical, cultural, and geographical roots of building materials within a 50 km radius of Jabad, Rajasthan. Explore Dhun's research further [here](#).





The Site

The township site is in a tranquil rural setting, about 35 km from Jaipur, surrounded by small villages each housing an average population of 1,000 to 1,500 residents. The competition site lies adjacent to the Dhun site. The area is predominantly agricultural, with no nearby buildings and minimal vegetation, consisting of a few small trees.

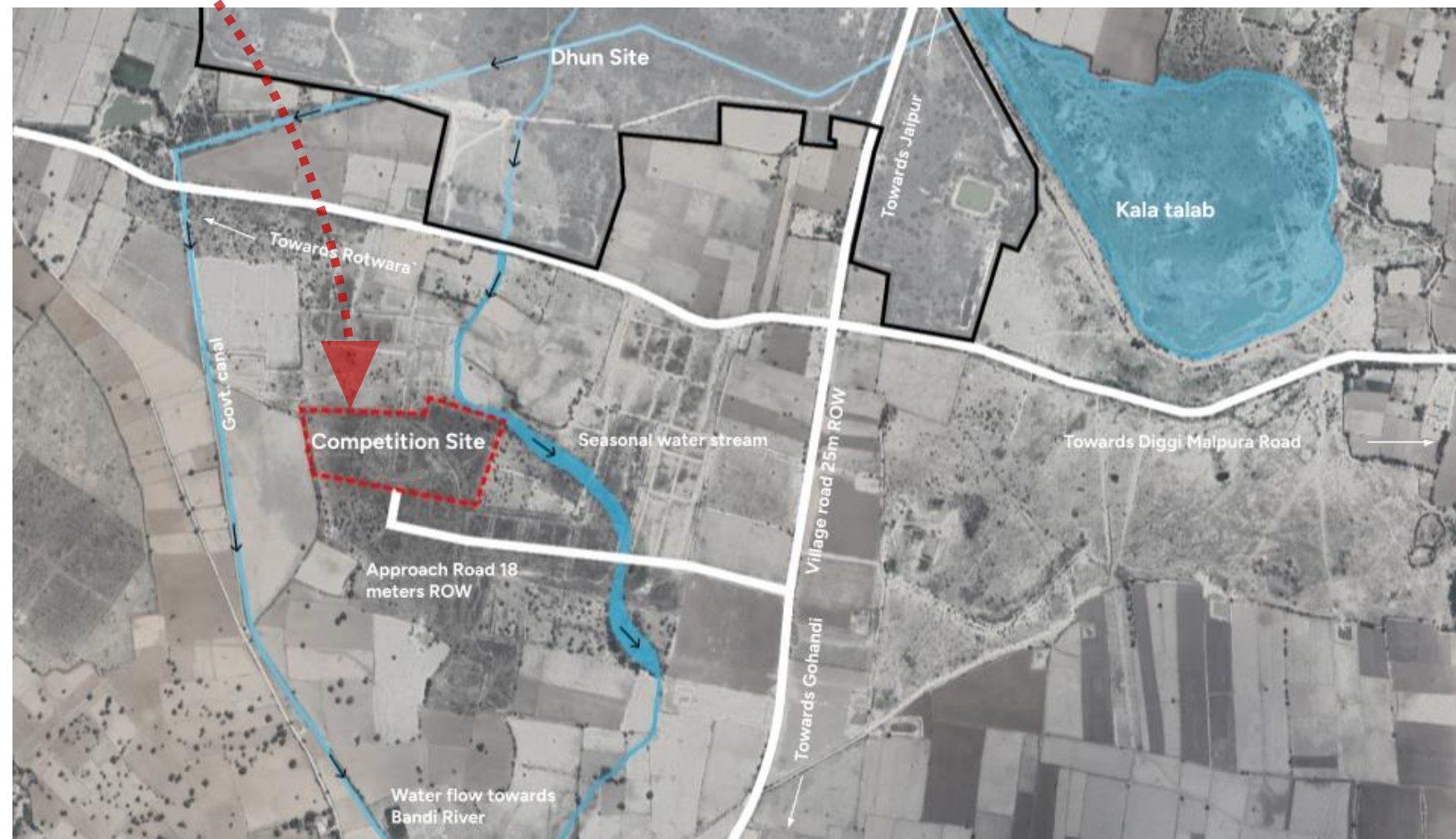
The competition site is a 9.5 Acre (38,283 sq.m) plot as shown in the image below. The plot is served by an 18-metre-wide road which will connect on the east with a proposed 25-metre road connecting Gohandi village to Jaipur. There are no built structures within the site boundary. The nearest village settlement is approximately 2 km south of the site. Please refer to the link [here](#) for site details.

Navigating Extreme Climates

The climate of Dhun is characterized as a 'semi-arid eastern plain' with respect to the agro-climate zones of Rajasthan. As per the climate zoning of India, the site falls in the 'hot and dry' zone which is predominant in Rajasthan.

The summer from March to June sees peak temperatures often reaching more than 45° C. Large diurnal temperature swings are experienced with night temperatures falling considerably. Winter extends from December to February with January being the coldest month when night temperatures often drop to below 10° C. Most of the annual rainfall of 50-60 cm occurs during the July to September monsoon. The micro-climate of the Dhun site is also moderated to some extent by its green cover and presence of water bodies. It is important to keep climate-extremities in mind which have become apparent in the last decade. The rainfall received in Jaipur in 2024, 67% more than in 2023, is a case in point!

Please refer to [this link](#) for a more detailed climate analysis of the site.



Competition Vision

The competition invites participants to reimagine housing that fosters a vibrant community living experience for Dhun employees, their families, and other interested residents. The site spans 9.5 acres, and the challenge is to accommodate at least 1,200 residents while ensuring a high quality of life.

The focus is on integrating living, working, learning, and recreational spaces within a sustainable, low-impact neighbourhood that is ecologically balanced, carbon and resource-efficient, pedestrian-friendly, and socially inclusive. Participants should demonstrate how thoughtful design, sustainable construction practices, and community-building can coexist to create a future-ready, eco-friendly, and aspirational affordable residential area.

Design & Planning Essentials

The design solutions invited by the competition will serve a minimum of 1200 residents comprising around 700-800 total units spread across three proposed housing typologies.

Of the total site area, 40% is to be allocated to facilities, green spaces, roads, and open areas, (minimum 5% greenery, 10% public utilities) 6% to commercial spaces, and 54% to mixed-use residential development.

The residential area should be conceived as plots not more than 2500 square metres in size. However, the plots are only notional, and the overall site must be planned as a fenceless ‘complete’ neighbourhood.

The site is envisioned as a low-rise neighbourhood consisting of up to G+3 buildings. The recommended maximum height of buildings is 15 metres.

Please refer to Rajasthan state unified building bye-laws for understanding the essential guidelines shaping design in this region with respect to building heights, setbacks, fire safety compliance and other details.

Three distinct types of accommodation will comprise the housing stock as described in the table below. Individual plots or clusters may be planned as a mix of one or all three typologies.

Type 1 <i>50-60% of the total share</i>	Type 2 <i>20-30% of the total share</i>	Type 3 <i>10-20% of the total share.</i>
Shared living spaces with single, double or triple shared rooms, and common shared facilities such as a kitchen, dining area, and toilets.	Private single or double - occupancy rooms equipped with small pantries and attached toilets.	Private living space for a family of 3-4 persons OR 2-3 young persons with living areas, kitchen, toilets, and other amenities.
Built-up area: 30-40 sq.m	Built-up area: 40-60 sq.m	Built-up area: 60-90 sq.m
Number of Units: 500-600 units + common shared facilities	Number of Units: 200-250 units	Number of Units: 70-100 units
Expected occupancy: 1-3 persons per unit	Expected occupancy: 1-2 persons per unit	Expected occupancy: 2-4 persons per unit

Core Design Principles & Evaluation Criteria

1. Ecological Integration and People-Nature Connectivity (20 Points)

Nature-connected living should be at the heart of the design, with natural elements and outdoor areas woven into the daily lives of residents, contributing to residents’ well-being and actively regenerating natural ecosystems.	How effectively does the master plan incorporate green spaces, water features, and natural elements to promote ecological health and well-being?
	Is there a strong connection between indoor and outdoor spaces, fostering a nature-connected lifestyle?
	Does the design contribute to biodiversity, reduce the urban heat island effect, and improve climate resilience?
	How unique and sensitive is the landscape strategy?

2. Healthy, Vibrant, and Socially Inclusive Communities (20 points)

Housing should be arranged around community spaces that encourage social interaction, inclusivity, and a strong sense of belonging. Designs should create an environment that fosters healthy living, through both the built environment and the community culture.	How effectively does the proposal create shared spaces that foster a sense of community and social interaction?
	Are spaces accessible to all, promoting social inclusivity, equity, and vibrancy?
	Does the design enhance healthy living in interior spaces as well as outdoor spaces through natural light, ventilation, and thoughtful public spaces?

3. Low-Impact Materials and Sustainable Construction (20 Points)

Designs must prioritize low embodied energy and a reduced carbon footprint by using sustainable materials and circular, resource-efficient techniques, allowing for materials to be reused or recycled at the end of the building's lifecycle.	Does the design use sustainable, low-carbon materials that reduce embodied energy of the building?
	What innovation has been applied in the selection of materials and construction techniques?
	How well are resource-efficient techniques and circular economy principles applied to minimize construction waste and end-of-life recovery of resources?
	Are local and renewable materials emphasized, supporting cost-efficiency and sustainability?

4. Integrated Systems for Sustainability (15 Points)

A holistic systems approach should be applied, integrating energy, water, and waste management into the design, ensuring that the community is as self-sufficient and resilient as possible.	Does the proposal integrate energy-efficient solutions such as solar energy, passive design, and low energy cooling to reduce operational energy?
	How well does the design manage water resources through rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling, and wastewater management systems?
	Does the master plan incorporate nature-based solutions?
	Does the neighbourhood employ a closed-loop waste management system, minimizing its environmental footprint?

5. Aesthetic and Cultural Harmony (10 Points)

The design should reflect the cultural heritage of Rajasthan and maintain cohesion with the natural landscape. Embrace and harmonize with contemporary architectural practices and design elements, ensuring that the architecture is both timeless and suited to the local climate.	Does the design respect the local cultural heritage while incorporating contemporary design elements?
	Is the aesthetic harmonious with the natural landscape, using materials that reflect the region’s identity?
	Does the design prioritize material honesty, purpose, and elegance and avoid unnecessary finishes?

6. Adaptability, Scalability, and Affordability (10 Points)

Designs must be adaptable to future needs, allowing for flexible housing configurations and the ability to evolve over time. Proposals should be affordable and scalable to other contexts, ensuring that the design can be replicated while maintaining its impact.	Is the housing design adaptable to changing family structures and community needs over time?
	Can the design be scaled or replicated in other contexts without losing its impact or sustainability?
	Does the proposal balance affordability with environmental and social sustainability, ensuring that housing is accessible to a wide range of users?

7. Bonus for Emerging Talent (5 points)

The competition encourages participation from young architects and designers with up to 5 years of professional experience
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Submission Requirements

STAGE 1: CONCEPT DESIGN SUBMISSION

The goal of this stage is to assess the creative vision, overall approach to sustainability, and the feasibility of the design concept.

Concept Design Sheets (3 - A2 sized sheets, max file size – 30 MB)

- Architectural design concepts and site layout including site plan, building footprints, vehicular movement, green and open spaces etc.
- Typical floor plans and conceptual details for all typologies.
- Visualizations - 2D/3D renders or sketches or massing diagrams showcasing key features and spaces.

Design Intent (up to 1,000 words, max file size – 5 MB)

- Vision for the housing project – How do you redefine housing based on the core design principles of this project?
- What is the proposed strategy to reduce/ minimize the environmental impact? –could be on account of building materials, operational energy and groundwater extraction.
- Supporting data and figures to support the innovative solutions that you want to implement in the project.

STAGE 2: DETAILED DESIGN SUBMISSION

For this phase, the deliverables will be more detailed and focus on the technical aspects of the project, buildability, and complete sustainability integration.

Design Drawings (up to 6 - A1 sized sheets, max file size – 90 MB)

- Site plan, Typical floor plans, at least 2 elevations and sections for all building typologies as mentioned in the design and planning essentials including typical unit layouts and common areas.
- Structural and material systems proposed for the buildings.
- Site layout/s to communicate planning principles – this may include gradient of housing density, landscaping and types of green cover, drainage, circulation, community spaces and waste-water treatment.

Sustainability Analysis (up to 3,000 words, max file size – 10 MB)

- **Material Optimization:** Analyse how your design efficiently utilizes materials, emphasizing renewable or recycled options while minimizing the reliance on energy and resource-intensive materials.
- **Carbon and Water Footprint:** Indicative assessment based on assumed data to show reductions in embodied carbon from materials and transportation, operational carbon, and water consumption in building operations.
- **Design simulations and calculations** to support the above assessment based on robust assumptions and a logical process will add value to the submission.

3D Renders and Visuals

Key visuals showcasing design aspects and a site model (digital or physical) to demonstrate the design's integration within the landscape.

Presentation Video (Optional)

A 2–3-minute video summarizing the design vision, key features, and approach to sustainability

How to submit

1. Please submit all materials in a digital format, preferably as a combined PDF or similar document, to the email address alturban@devalt.org. Ensure that you grant access to the attached files in the submission email; any inaccessible submissions will not be eligible for evaluation.
2. A Unique Registration Number (URN) will be provided to you which you may use for reference in any communication and while submitting entries.
3. Please name files clearly according to the content (e.g., "Design Proposal_URN.pdf").
4. Please ensure that there is no reference to any text or images that may reveal the identity of the participating individuals or organisations in any form or manner. The jury process will be completely anonymous and transparent and any entries found to have any reference to the participants' identity shall be immediately disqualified.

Please note

1. Entries that do not comply with the competition rules or are deemed plagiarised will be disqualified.
2. Only candidates who are shortlisted in Stage 1 will be invited for site visits and additional competition-related activities.
3. By entering the competition, participants grant the organizers the right to use submitted materials for promotion and publication. Due credit will be given for the use of such material.



Please reach out to us at alturban@devalt.org if you have any queries.

