



NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF INDIA

भारत के बहाइयों की राष्ट्रीय आध्यात्मिक सभा

Dear Sir/Madam,

PRE-QUALIFICATION – DESIGN OF LOCAL BAHÁ'Í HOUSE OF WORSHIP FOR BIHAR SHARIF, BIHAR, INDIA

On behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India, we are delighted to announce a project to raise a local Bahá'í House of Worship, to be situated in the community of Bihar Sharif in Bihar. This House of Worship will be one of only five local Temples currently being planned and constructed in different countries around the globe and will join a series of eight continental Houses of Worship that have been completed and two national Houses of Worship that are currently being planned for.

To those interested designers and consulting firms, an invitation is extended to submit an Expression of Interest ('EOI') to participate in the architect selection process. While shortlisted teams will be provided further briefing materials, some details concerning the nature of this project are set out below for your consideration.

The Bahá'í Faith in India

The Bahá'í Faith has a long- standing historical association with India from its inception in 1844. The Indian Bahá'í community, like its sister communities throughout the world, reflects in its composition the full diversity of the peoples of its national community, reflecting a central principle of the Baha'i Faith – the unity of mankind. Today, almost two million Baha'is in India represent its great diversity in over 10,000 localities spread across every state.

The Bahá'ís of India, together with others, are actively working towards the betterment of society through the processes of individual and social transformation. Along with men, women, children and youth from every walk of life, they are engaged in a collective learning enterprise. The guidance and resources for all these activities are channelled through Baha'i governing councils at the local, regional and national levels. At present, there are nineteen regional and about 600 local councils functioning harmoniously in a spirit of non-adversarial consultation under the aegis of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of India, which is the apex body looking after the affairs of the Indian Baha'i community. Through these efforts and in collaboration with a number of like-minded organisations, the Baha'is of India are learning to address the challenges facing present day society such as the prevalence of caste and class prejudice, gender inequality, communal disharmony, illiteracy, lack of education, violence, poverty, corruption and moral degradation.

Project statement

Representing the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith, the House of Worship stands as a universal place of worship open to all the inhabitants of a locality irrespective of their religious affiliation, background, ethnicity, or gender and provides a haven for the deepest contemplation on spiritual reality. Men and women, children and youth, are held in its embrace as equals.

Vivid imagery of the operation of a House of Worship is set out by Baha'u'llah, the Prophet Founder of the Bahá'í Faith. He enjoins the individual, at the hour of dawn, to centre their thoughts on God and direct their steps to the "Mashriqu'l-Adhkár" (meaning the dawning place of the mention of God). A House of Worship is considered to be much more than simply a building. It is representative of two essential aspects of life, worship and service. Bahá'ís believe that through acts of worship in these heavenly Temples, "the fragrance of God will be diffused" and those who gather within its walls will derive the necessary inspiration before flowing out to engage in their daily pursuits.

The Temple itself provides a space solely for the purpose of worship, however, it can be envisioned as a spiritual centre of a community that contributes to a flourishing pattern of community life.

Design requirements

The essentials of the design are that the building should be nine-sided, circular in shape, and it may have a dome. The design should allow for up to 250 friends to be gathered in the centre of that building facing the Bahá'í Qiblih (the shrine of Baha'u'llah which is in present day Israel, is the spot towards which Baha'is turn to pray). Design teams will be called upon to design a Temple that is "as perfect as is possible in the world of being" that harmonizes naturally with the local culture and the daily lives of those who will gather to pray and meditate therein. This task calls for creativity and skill to combine beauty, grace, and dignity with modesty, functionality, and economy.

Architects should be mindful that the existing continental Houses of Worship – particularly the House of Worship in Delhi - do not constitute a pattern that must be followed.

EOI Requirements

Following consideration of the nature and aspirations of this project, together with its practical requirements, if you wish to express your interest to participate in the design selection process – you are invited to submit the following:

- Details of your consulting firm.
- A capability statement of your firm's experience and resources to undertake the project.
- A statement of interest (maximum 1 A4 page) outlining your thoughts concerning this project and your approach/considerations to developing a design in harmony with the culture and lives of those who will pray within the Temple. In addition, what does it mean to you to undertake a design to combine beauty, grace, and dignity with modesty, functionality, and economy?
- Possible approaches you may take to identifying a concept.
- Possible approaches you may take in working with a community, including project examples, if any.

Submission of EOI

Written expressions of interest together with the relevant information may be submitted in Hindi or English. Submissions must be received at the email address below not later than 16:00 hrs on 20th June 2018. Late submissions may not be considered. All enquiries up to the point of submission can be directed to

Email:biharsharifbhw@ibnc.in

Review of EOI

The information provided by the consulting firms will be used to prepare a pre-qualification shortlist, who will be informed by email within 6 weeks. Shortlisted design teams will be notified and provided with further briefing materials to enable an initial concept submission to be presented. Upon confirming participation, we may request to meet with you, to further discuss the proposed scope.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India is not bound to any shortlist bidder and reserves the right to annul or modify the selection process at any time without incurring any liabilities or providing any reason thereof.

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