

Global Holcim Awards Jury Meeting 2009

Project appraisal

Global Holcim Awards Silver 2009

Low-impact greenfield university campus, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

A new campus for an architectural university in the middle of the Mekong River Delta aspires to achieve harmony with all elements of the surrounding ecosystem: the waters of the river and the flooding of the rice fields, the mangroves, the winds and their patterns as well as with the seasonal changes of light and shadow. The project avoids massive reclamation of land. It so also emulates traditions of Southeast Asian agricultural civilization.

The gently bended, intertwined ovals, which characterize the layout of the buildings, and their intersections, create a diversity of large halls and small rooms – a fuzzy logic which allows scholars and students to communicate and interact in many ways, and the university to organically organize itself along changing ideas and needs to come.

Blending into the context of light, winds and water allows reducing the ecological footprint to a minimum. Day light and natural ventilation are used to maximum. Rain water is harvested. Local materials like bamboo and mangroves are used wherever possible.

The formal principle of gentle curves, shaded open halls and a multitude of small spaces and communicating halls host and cover the members of the academic community in a protective way without locking them into too narrowly pre-defined conditions of hierarchy and rigid organization.