

International *Accessibility Symbol* Design Competition

A Competition to design a new graphic symbol of accessibility that reflects the diversity of people who use buildings and other built environments



COMPETITION ORGANIZERS

International Union of Architects (UIA)

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IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

Question should be sent to e.bonin@uia-architectes.org.

SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES

Entries are to be submitted electronically through the UIA Submission Platform at <https://uia.awardsplatform.com/>

KEY DATES

- Competition announced and launched: [18 January 2022](#)
- Deadline for the receipt of questions: [14 February 2022](#)
- Answers for the questions: [25 February 2022](#)
- Submission Deadline: [25 March 2022, 17:00, Paris time](#)
- Jury Meeting: [07 April 2022](#)
- Winners Announcement: [18 April 2022](#)
- Award Ceremony: To be held virtual/in-person in conjunction with UIA Forum in Madrid.



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INTRODUCTION

The UIA (International Union of Architects) and RI (Rehabilitation International) are jointly inviting submissions for a 21st Century symbol of accessibility to represent their core values of rights and inclusion, equity and independence, diversity, physical and virtual accessibility for all, including people with disabilities.

The International Symbol of Accessibility (ISA) did not exist 50 years ago. It was created in a design competition organised by RI-ICTA (International Commission on Accessibility and Technology) and won by Danish design student Susanne Koefoed in 1968. The ISA, which is also known as the “wheelchair logo”, is widely used by architects and others to identify buildings, facilities and other elements of the built environment that are accessible to people with disabilities.

The symbol is deemed the property of Rehabilitation International and its design and use are covered by the ISO Standard 7001.



Over the past few years, however, an alternate icon has rolled into sight. The “Accessible Icon,” a rival wheelchair symbol that confers motion on the figure. This symbol has recently mushroomed into a movement, even being codified in emoji. It has also created backlash: variously called ableist and empowering. It has been officially rejected by ISO and deemed federally illegal despite adoption by several states in the USA. Now the ISA has found its way into the middle of a growing debate over how people with disabilities should be represented.

The ISA has contributed to a widely held perception that accessibility and inclusion are solely about mobility impairments . . . and wheelchair-users.

*“Many feel the symbol needs change. The wheelchair figure does not represent disabilities like impaired vision and hearing loss or the broader spectrum of people who may be excluded by design. Many feel the wheelchair itself.. doesn’t accurately represent how persons with a disability function at work, at school or in the community”. Anonymous, **BraunAbility***

The challenge is therefore to develop a new symbol of accessibility that better represents the diversity of people who use buildings and other types of built environments.



REGULATIONS

1. Important Names, Dates, and Addresses:

Competition Organizers:	<p>International Union of Architects (UIA) Tour Maine Montparnasse 33, avenue du Maine - B.P. 158 75755 PARIS Cedex 15 – France</p> <p>Tel: +33 (0)1 45 24 36 88 Email: uia@uia-architectes.org Web: http://www.uia-architectes.org</p> <p>Rehabilitation International (RI) 866 United Nations Plaza, Office 422 New York, New York 10017, USA</p> <p>Phone: +1 (212) 420 - 1500 Email: information@RIGlobal.org Web: http://www.riglobal.org/</p>
Address and deadline for receipt of questions:	Questions should be sent to e.bonin@uia-architectes.org by 14 February 2022.
Address and deadline for receipt of entries	Entries are to be submitted electronically through the UIA Prizes Platform at https://uia.awardsplatform.com/ by 25 March 2022 by 17:00 Paris time.

2. Interpretation of Brief

The Jury reserves the rights of final interpretation of the brief clauses.

3. Eligibility Criteria

- The competition is open to architects, graphic designers, and architectural and graphic design students
- Entries will be accepted from individuals as well as teams.
- Each individual/team can submit only one entry.

4. Official Language

The official language for the competition and submissions is English.

5. Registration of Competitors

Competitors are required to register through the UIA Prizes Platform at <https://uia.awardsplatform.com/>.

Participation in the competition is free of charge.

6. Jury

- **Zhang Haidi**, China, Rehabilitation International President
- **Anna Crider**, USA, Society for Experiential Graphic Design (SEGD) Past President
- **Barry Gray**, UK, ISO/TC 145/SC 1/WG/4 "Graphical Symbols", Convenor and BSI Committee PH/8 Graphical Symbols and Signs, Chair
- **Mikhail Terentiev**, Russia, All-Russian Society of Disabled People (ARSDP), Chairperson
- **Allen Kong**, Australia, UIA Architecture-for-All (AfA) Work Programme Director
- **Safaa Issa Abdou**, Egypt, Alternate Jury Member, Professor of Architecture, faculty of Engineering, Menofia University, Egypt

7. Questions and Answers

Competitors may pose questions anonymously regarding the Brief per above timetable.

8. Prizes and Prize Money

- First, Second and Third Prize Winners will be awarded, in addition to up to three (3) Honorable Mentions, at the discretion of the Jury.
- First Prize: US\$5,000.00 and certificate; Second Prize: US\$2,500.00 and certificate; Third Prize: US\$1,500.00 and certificate,

Up to 3 Honorable Mentions US\$500.00 and certificates

- Winners will be notified of the Competition results directly. A list of winning designs will be posted on the UIA and RI websites and promoted to media outlets.

9. Declaration of the Organisers' Intent

The overarching goal of the competition is to develop a new symbol that better represents the diversity of people who use buildings and other built environments. While the UIA and RI will reward and promote the winning entries, the success of the competition will be far-reaching if the symbol is adopted by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). As such:

- Competition winning design will be submitted to ISO/TC 145 "Graphical Symbols" Work Group for its consideration for adoption as a new International Symbol of Accessibility.

10. Submissions

- Submissions will be accepted electronically through the UIA Prizes Platform only, at <https://uia.awardsplatform.com/>. UIA and RI Logo and Name of Competition to be shown on a footer on each sheet.
- Submission requirements noted under Programme section below
- Late submissions will **NOT** be accepted.

11. Jury Decisions

The jury awards shall be final and sovereign; decisions of the jury are not subject to reconsideration by the Organisers, in whole or in part, and binding on all parties concerned and decisions cannot be appealed.

12. Rights

The submitting authors of the design accept that the design they are submitting is original work and that they possess explicit authorisation to use any artwork or element that is not their original work. The proof of such authorisation must be included in the submission. The author, if a sole author, affirms that they are the sole author(s) of the submitted work, and that they have full and exclusive rights to grant the UIA and RI the authority to use the work, without reserve.

Upon submission of the entries, the author grants the UIA and RI the unrestricted worldwide rights, including and without limitations all copyrights, which include non-exclusive licence to use, copy and reproduce the design of the symbol provided, which shall become the exclusive property of the UIA and RI.

The granting of exclusive authors' rights is limited to the prize winners and awards stipulated in Article 8 of the Regulations outlined herewith (otherwise known as winners of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes and other beneficiaries of honourable mentions).

Participation in the competition and the prize awarding result in the transmission to the UIA and to RI of the rights of representation, of reproduction and of distribution of the symbol without consideration other than the prize benefit and the financial endowment designated to each. The author renounces to collect any royalties on this logo, without limitation of quantity and duration.

The author is exempt from all compensation or royalties beyond the total prize money awarded. The UIA and RI retain the right not to use the design or to adjust the design and translate and publish the design to promote accessibility globally via media channels, trade press, social media, events and publications.

The author(s) waive(s) any compensation or royalty beyond the total amount of prizes awarded.

The UIA and the RI reserve the right not to use the logo, to adjust the project, to translate it and publish it to promote accessibility on a global scale via the media, the specialised press, social networks, events and publications.

13. Exhibition

Winning designs will be displayed at the UIA Madrid Forum on Affordable Housing 18-21 May 2022 and during the RI Centennial Celebration in 2022 (to be confirmed)

PROGRAMME

1. Submission Requirements

Entries are required to have four (4) submission components, as follows:

A. Digital Graphics Package

- 2 high quality Vector files (ai, eps or stl graphic files): one in 4 colour (CMYK) and 1 in 1 colour (black & white)
- 2 JPG files (each a minimum of 300dpi): 1 in RGB colour and the other in 1 colour (black & white)
- The names of competitors or their practice/school/organization, must **NOT** appear on any of the submission components.

B. Design Intent Statement

A brief design intent statement of 500 words (in PDF format) is required as part of the submission describing the critical elements of the design concept and relay information on selection of shape, size, form, colour, visual clarity and acuity of the symbol or a suite of symbols. Additionally, the statement should address how input and advice from persons with disabilities contributed to the design process.

- Participants (professional and student) should engage with at least two (2) persons with disabilities or with at least two (2) local disabled persons' organisations (DPOs) or non-government organisations (NGOs) working with/for people with disabilities, or others whom this competition is intended to benefit. Such engagement could be in the form of dialogues and interviews to seek their views and aspirations on the proposed symbol or a suite of symbols. Ideally, the individuals and DPOs who are consulted should represent the wide diversity of people who use building and other built environments including, but not limited to, those with a range of mobility, vision, hearing, strength, stamina, dexterity and cognitive abilities.
- The graphic presentation should convey the design solution and context as much as possible. The symbol should stand alone: it should not rely on a narrative to communicate the intent of the design.

2. Evaluation

Entries will be judged on the following:

- The success of the symbol (or suite of symbols) in reflecting concepts of inclusion, diversity, equity, independence, and physical and virtual accessibility, such that it can be used to effectively identify facilities as being accessible and welcoming for everyone.
- Symbols or a suite of symbols should take account of the diversity of people who may use them.
- the appropriateness and coherence of the overall concept.
- the symbolic and communicative capacity of the symbol(s); and
- the graphic quality of the symbols.

Entrants should:

- Reflect on the UIA Work Programme Architecture for All “[Guidelines on Accessible and Inclusive Built Environments” 2019](#)
- Fulfill the aspirations of the [UN-CRPD Article 9: Accessibility](#); the [UN SDG Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable](#); and the [Habitat III, New Urban Agenda](#).