

THE URBED AWARD 2017

For MBA students at SCAD (Social Change and Development)

The URBED Award is an opportunity to apply your skills and interests to the issues of urbanisation in Southern India, and is open to current students at the Tirunelveli and Cheranmahadevi campuses. It offers financial prizes and the chance of a Fellowship to develop your business ideas further. There are three categories: tourism, water and energy, and eco homes.

What is the Award?

The URBED Award has been sponsored by Dr Nicholas Falk, the founder of URBED and Chairman of The URBED Trust in London. Nicholas studied for an MBA at Stanford Business School in California where he undertook a special project on increasing food output in India. He then joined McKinsey and Company as a management consultant, specialising in energy. After working for a Phd on planning and development at the London School of Economics he set up his own not for profit company URBED in 1976. URBED specialises in urban regeneration and new communities, with a focus on sustainable masterplanning. He now chairs The URBED Trust, set up to disseminate the lessons from URBED's experience (www.urbed.coop) He was the co-winner of the 2014 Wolfson Economics Prize for showing how to build new garden cities that are visionary, viable and popular.

The URBED prizes, which will be continued if the initial results are good, for 2017 will be awarded to the authors of the best reports. Up to three winners or winning teams will be invited to:

- The Public Award ceremony in February to receive their Certificate of Outstanding Merit
- Receive their cash prize
- Feature on the International Profile on SCAD's official web site.

You are invited to submit your entry for one of the three categories below. Only one entry either individually or as a member of a team is allowed. An initial shortlist will be drawn up, followed by the selection of the first and second prize winners in each category for the best reports. The winners will be invited to present their proposals to Nicholas Falk in the presence of their fellow students before being awarded their prize.

How do you win?

The judges will be looking for:

1. A clear analysis of the chosen problem or opportunity using available data
2. Practical proposals for how it might be tackled locally, drawing examples from [elsewhere] – other cities and countries
3. A business plan for marketing or production opportunities that a small business could exploit
4. A convincing short presentation (under ten minutes in English)
5. A concise and well-structured report (under ten pages plus appendices or supporting charts or diagrams)

What are the topics for 2017?

There are three topics, and you are advised to pick the one that is of most interest to you, and which fits in with your course work or family experience.

1. Tourism and hospitality

Tourism is growing in India, but is largely concentrated in a few well-known places such as in the backwaters of Kerala or the Nilgiri Hills. More visitors from Europe and elsewhere could be attracted to spend time and money in Southern India, which includes places with a special heritage and character. However, even though transport communications have improved, Tirunelveli and the Southern coast do not even feature in the main English language guides for foreign tourists.

SCAD already draws visitors every year, and there may be potential to develop 'cultural tourism', for example through Homestays or Boutique Hotels that allow visitors to meet up with local people or eat good food. Tirunelveli is competing to be one of the country's Smart Cities, and consideration is being given to making the area round the main temple traffic-free. But even now the City and adjoining area of Palyamkottai could form part of a circular tour that also included cities with airports.

A successful report will:

- identify potential market opportunities for different forms of tourism
- make use of examples of what has been done in similar places

- work out how a new tourism business could operate
- estimate the likely costs and returns from such a business
- propose how the chosen project could be taken forward.

Note, a similar project (The Maxine Award) is being set for young women in SCAD colleges to examine visitor information, and there may be scope for collaboration.

2. Energy and water

Shortages of energy and water are major constraints on future growth, and will discourage future investment. Yet the sun shines most of the year, and the annual monsoon causes flooding. Opportunities should exist to use solar power and other forms of renewable energy, particularly in new developments. The State Water Company has secured a \$300 million loan from the World Bank, and major projects are planned for improving water quality and supply. At the same time action is needed to avoid contamination and there is still a great shortage of toilets.

So as well as the major state-wide projects, there may be local opportunities. For example there could be scope for 'mini grids' that are independent of the State electricity system, using batteries to store power over night, or for installing toilets that do not use water. The municipality is considering planning a new 'smart city' development that would apply 'best practice'. There may be opportunities for catching more water in local reservoirs, and for distributing it more effectively where it is most needed.

A successful report will:

- identify potential market opportunities from making better use of water or energy
- make use of examples of what has been done in similar places
- work out how a new business could operate
- estimate the likely costs and returns from such a business
- propose how the chosen project could be taken forward.

3. Eco homes

Growing urbanisation is creating a huge demand for new homes. As well as apartment blocks in the main centres, there will also be a need for family

housing on the edges of towns and in new planned suburbs. However as land for growing crops is scarce and roads are already congested, the new housing needs to be very carefully located and designed for to be sustainable by minimising the use of scarce resources. At present, concrete is extensively used, which is very energy intensive. Hence there could be demand for new homes that make much more use of local natural resources, that use renewable sources of energy, and that are designed to be affordable to ordinary families.

SCAD is going to investigate, with support from The URBED Trust, the options for building a demonstration project for a new 'eco village' on the campus at Cheranmahadevi, and there could be scope for experimenting with new solutions. In addition there may be land available close to some of the railway stations around Tirunelveli that could be linked up to new water supplies. One opportunity that has already been identified is for local farmers to grow a new cash crop, such as Industrial Hemp, which is in growing demand for making fabric and also car body panels. This leaves a stem that could be combined with lime to make 'hemcrete', and there may be other similar waste materials that could be used in building walls or roofs. .

A successful report will:

- identify potential market opportunities from making better use of water or energy
- make use of examples of what has been done in similar places
- work out how a new property development or construction business could operate
- estimate the likely costs and returns from such a business
- propose how the chosen project could be taken forward.

How do I enter?

To enter the competition, simply contact us using the contact form at the bottom of the [Smarter Urbanisation website](#). Completed entries are required by January the 31st.

Dr Nicholas Falk August 5th 2016