Breathing Envelope
Vertically-stacked convention center and public spaces, Bogotá, Colombia

Summary and appraisal by the jury
The jury values the dialog that the project establishes between the fields of architecture and engineering, with both disciplines mutually informing one another, ultimately combining state-of-the-art technologies with formal expression. The deployment of high-tech mechanical systems for ventilation, lighting, heating, cooling, water management and power generation, including the use of surface geothermal energy storage — is done with restraint, leading to an architecture that appears noble, quiet and discreet — technology not for technology’s sake, but at the service of users, architecture and the environment.

Sustainability concept
Progress: The equatorial mountain climate of Bogotá, with stable average temperatures (13.5°C) but high daily fluctuations (0 to 23°C), calls for a specific approach to climate control. The project focuses on the optimization of natural ventilation and lighting, supported by reined control systems, to achieve optimal energy efficiency.

People: Initiated by a public-private partnership, Ágora Bogotá is part of the major urban regeneration strategy of Corferias, the fair and exhibition complex of Bogotá. The initiative aims to develop the fairground towards the global center, along by transforming an old industrial quarter into a new urban centrality in the geographical heart of the city in order for ‘local public space to be the new cosmopolitan’. The project seeks vertically in a compact building with a stacked program in five levels of meeting rooms, ballrooms and service areas.

Planet: The project focuses on the optimization of natural ventilation and lighting, supported by reined control systems, to achieve optimal energy efficiency. The active façade offers low maintenance and a long life span. Native vegetation on the site enhances ecological corridors. A convention center demands flexibility. The project favors vertical circulation, combines specialized and generic spaces and fits a varied event plan. A thorough understanding of the structural over the decorative. Scarce materials, a combination of formal expression and aesthetic concerns for ventilation, lighting, heating, cooling, water management and power generation, including the use of surface geothermal energy storage — is done with restraint, leading to an architecture that appears noble, quiet and discreet — technology not for technology’s sake, but at the service of users, architecture and the environment.

Further authors
Daniel Bermúdez, Daniel Bermúdez Arquitecto, Bogotá, Colombia and Juan Herreros, architect, Estudio Herreros, Madrid, Spain

Acknowledgement
Image 1: Ágora Bogotá is part of the major urban regeneration strategy of Corferias, the fair and exhibition complex of Bogotá. The initiative aims to develop the fairground towards the global center, along by transforming an old industrial quarter into a new urban centrality in the geographical heart of the city in order for ‘local public space to be the new cosmopolitan’. The project seeks vertically in a compact building with a stacked program in five levels of meeting rooms, ballrooms and service areas.