Arboreal Platform
Low-impact timber rainforest center, Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí, Costa Rica

Main author
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Summary by the jury
The design for the headquarters of the Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Cordillera Volcánica Central (Fundecor) in Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí, Costa Rica is appropriately located in the midst of a forest. The nonprofit organization aims to “contribute to sustainable management of natural resources and improve quality of life” in rainforest regions. Accordingly, the knowledge center will inform its users about the management of woodlands and the benefits to develop an economy dependent on forestry services, while promoting environmental conservation. Entitled Arboreal Platform, the project is organized on an elevated podium that hovers above the ground and is surrounded by trees. Four buildings on the platform frame a central courtyard. The entire structure is made of wood and covered by a roof using panels made of recycled aluminum milk packages. Internal climate comfort is provided by a low-cost combination of passive and active systems, including the use of grey water for the sanitation system.

Appraisal by the jury
The jury greatly appreciates the project’s general posture vis-à-vis sustainable development, one giving due credit to an understanding of sustainability as a “common sense” culture and contributing to an architecture based on fundamental principles. A broad spectrum of complex environmental parameters is addressed to create a simple and seemingly self-evident building, a straightforward structure that is nonetheless poetic in its expression. All in all, the design offers a suitable and convincing solution for a foundation dedicated to preserving the biodiversity of the natural habitat.

Project data
Context Architecture, building and civil engineering
Client Fundecor (Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Cordillera Volcánica Central)
Background Private commission
Planned start February 2015

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Image 3: Minimal impact on the ground.

Image 4: Program organization by activity.

Image 5: Detail of constructive elements.

Image 6: Building features.

Image 7: Assembly parts; Study models.

Image 8: Interior atmosphere.

Image 9: Pedestrian approach to the platform.

Image 10: The inner courtyard: A protected forest.

More at www.holcimawards.org/projects/arboreal-platform