

ISOLA - EIGHTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SECRETARY'S REPORT

A very warm welcome to all at this 8th AGM of the Indian Society of Landscape Architects...I am one of the newly elected members of the Executive Council and I feel privileged to have been considered capable of holding the position of Honorary Secretary of the Society. I hereby present to you the Secretary's Annual Report at our 8th AGM - an occasion that gives us the opportunity to evaluate and assess our performance, present our ongoing endeavors and outline our future plans.

One of the key ideals of the previous EC has been to bring in transparency in the functioning of the Executive Council and the ISOLA at all levels and achieve fruitful coordination with the Chapters. To this ideal, we would like to add PROACTIVE PARTICIPATION FROM ALL MEMBERS AND WELL-WISHERS OF ISOLA and we would like to work towards this goal by including participatory programs at the Centre and at Chapter level.

The following points have been elaborated in this report:

1. Status of ISOLA Elections
2. Status of ISOLA Accounts
3. Status of ISOLA Website
4. Report on the functioning of the various committees within ISOLA
5. Forthcoming/Planned events of the Society
6. Professional Issues that need to be addressed

STATUS OF ISOLA ELECTIONS

As notified to all members via email, the biannual elections to the Executive Council were held in the beginning of 2013 via postal ballot and after opening of ballot papers on the 16th of March 2013 under the supervision of the Election Officer Shri Rajnikant Trivedi, the following members were elected unopposed to the new Executive Council.

Fellow Members:	Savita Punde	Sachin Jain
	Yogesh Kapoor	Ashish Patankar
	Mangesh Prabhugaonkar	Shilpa Chandawarkar

Rohit Marol would continue to be a part of the Executive Council in the capacity of Past President.

Associate Members:	Atul Katariya	Vandana Labba
	Gopal Vilas Bajaj	

It was resolved to co-opt Sandip Patil as an Associate member of the EC.

The office bearers of the current Executive Council are as follows:

Honorary President:	Sachin Jain
Honorary Vice-President:	Yogesh Kapoor
Honorary Treasurer:	Ashish Patankar
Honorary Secretary:	Shilpa Chandawarkar

The current Executive Council has commenced its two-year term from April 01, 2013.

Bye-elections were called for the single vacant seat of Fellow member, however since no nominations were received in the stipulated period, it was unanimously decided to let it remain vacant or co-opt any suitable person at a later date as required.

ISOLA CHAPTER ELECTION UPDATE

The Election for the Executive Committee of ISOLA Mumbai MMR Local Chapter for the term 2013-2015 were conducted after a second call dated 23rd May 2013 as there were no nominations within the

scheduled period as outlined in the first call for elections dated 9th February 2013. Five valid nominations were received and all candidates were declared elected unopposed. The new Executive Committee which had taken charge on 29.06.2013, elected its office bearers and the names are as follows:

Honorary Chairperson:	Swati Dike
Honorary Secretary:	Devayani Upasani
Honorary Treasurer:	Suvarna Sathe
Chapter Representative:	Arjun Sharma
EC Members:	Urmila Rajadhyaksha, Bhakti Thakoor

As already reported in the last AGM, the Bengaluru chapter had also concluded its elections. The office bearers are:

Honorary Chairperson:	Prasad G.
Honorary Secretary:	Meenakshi Kamat
Honorary Treasurer:	Priya Prakash

We are pleased to announce the intent of Gujarat members to form a chapter, the permission for which was accorded to them and subsequently they held the first General meeting on 24th August 2013. Their election report has been received and after due discussion in the forthcoming EC meeting today evening, the formation of the Gujarat Chapter will be formally recognised.

STATUS OF ISOLA ACCOUNTS

We take this opportunity to place on record the consolidated accounts of ISOLA (which includes the Central ISOLA, and all its chapters –Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai, and all its LOCs – Ahmedabad and Bhopal) for the year ending 31st March 2013 and they are ready to be filed once they are approved at this AGM. This is a sure sign that the endeavour of the previous EC to frame guidelines for good accounting procedures and prepare a set of financial guidelines and set procedures in place for all times to come is now yielding positive results. All procedures and guidelines are in place for financial matters and are being rigorously adhered to in our endeavor to achieve water-tight financial discipline and complete transparency.

There are certain issues such as delayed filing of TDS returns and delayed response to demands and notices from Income Tax Authorities pertaining to TDS etc. which still need to be addressed, but we hope to close all these pending issues at the earliest and ensure timely compliance in future.

STATUS OF ISOLA WEBSITE

Our website www.isola.org.in has been recently updated with the following data:

- Updated list of members
- Minutes of all EC meetings up to June 2013 and minutes of the 7th AGM
- List of Executive Council Office bearers and Members
- List of Chapter Executive Committee Members and contact information
- Abstracts of previous conferences
- Excerpts of the Bhopal conference are also available on YouTube. The link of the same has been uploaded on the website.
- Announcements of the Forthcoming Events such as the Seminar following this AGM, the next National Conference, the ISOLA Honours and Awards

Our donors play a significant role in helping our Society to run our various programmes and research initiatives. ISOLA acknowledges the role of these donors through our new section on the website.

Many members have written to us regarding the difficulties they face in accessing the Members Login Section on the website. We have requested the Web hosting managers to help us in reloading the entire database of members shortly.

At this point, we would also request members to update their contact information with ISOLA. A number of email ids, contact numbers and addresses available with us are invalid and as a result we are not able to ensure that all information is made available to all members.

We now have new email ids which are person-independent on which the Executive Council members can be reached.

Honorary President: president@isola.org.in

Honorary Vice-President: vicepresident@isola.org.in

Honorary Secretary: secretary@isola.org.in

Honorary Treasurer: treasurer@isola.org.in

We would like to appreciate the efforts of Adit Pal in helping us with updating and improving the functioning of the website.

REPORT ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE VARIOUS COMMITTEES WITHIN ISOLA

• RESOURCE COMMITTEE

The Resource Committee spear-headed by an advisory panel of Prof.Ram Sharma, Prof.Mohammed Shaheer, Prof.Kishor Pradhan, Adit Pal and ably steered by its Convenor Yogesh Kapoor and members Savita Punde, Sachin Jain, Nikhil Dhar, Nidhi Madan and Dwaipayan Bhattacharya have been actively working on documentation of the following:

1. Public spaces in Indian Cities

A format has been prepared and work commenced on documentation of certain open spaces in Delhi and approval from the Government organisations is sought. On assessment and approval of this format, the Resource Committee would then share it with other chapters and ask for volunteers to commence work on the same locally.

2. Listing of books related to Landscape Architecture

The listing of books would be based on categories: Planting, Soils, Design, Lighting, Landscape Engineering, Irrigation, etc. Work is in progress and the same will be uploaded shortly.

The final aim of this exercise is to create an inventory which will serve as an important data source for students, graduate and associate members.

3. Specifications of Materials (Landscape Finishes)

These would include Landscape Civil Finishes and Landscape Horticulture works.

We have a rich tradition of landscape finishes in different parts of the country like granite, solid sand stone works, fine chisel dressed sand stone, laterite, local stone. It has been observed recently that the authorities in the public works department are not aware of these finishes and are reluctant to include these in their works even when they are specified. This is important so that these become a part of landscape profession and are also accepted by the authorities. A lot of the finishes are available in the local public works engineering specifications and the Bureau of Indian Standards.

These finishes, specifications are to be documented with information from our offices and ISOLA

members and contributions and information from similar organizations like Centre for Development of Stones, Jaipur and other manufacturers.

4. Nikhil Dhar is putting together a document on the Traditional Techniques of Rain Water Harvesting

With these concerted research initiatives, over a period of time, we hope to be able to have a significant database of significant landscapes, public and historic spaces, gardens and ecological habitats. It is also recommended to hold discussions/ debates/ presentations/film-shows inviting interested students from the fields of landscape and architecture and encourage a healthy exchange of thoughts and ideas.

• **EDUCATION BOARD**

The Education board for the current term has been reinstated with the following members :

Prof. Deepa Maheshwari (Chairperson)

Prof. Mohammed Shaheer (Advisor)

Prof. Surinder Suneja

Savita Punde

Dr. Shishir Raval

Dr. Abhijit Natu

Sandip Patil

The Education Board shall primarily look into setting up definitive guidelines for courses to be recognised by ISOLA and continue their pursuits towards excellence in landscape education.

• **PROFESSIONAL STANDING COMMITTEE & ISOLA CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Professional Code of Conduct is being drafted and we look forward to active participation from members for this. Those interested in volunteering may please contact Rohit Marol.

• **MANUAL OF PROCEDURES**

The past EC with Mr. Rohit Marol as the co-ordinator along with member Mr. Avadhoot Kumthekar had put together a draft Manual of procedures for running ISOLA. Members keenly felt a need for this document as it would clearly set out how the society functioned, especially in the case of formalities to be followed by incoming EC members. We are currently consolidating the document.

FORTHCOMING / PLANNED EVENTS OF THE SOCIETY

• **ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

The 9th Annual Conference of ISOLA is scheduled to be held on the 28th of February and 1st of March 2014 at New Delhi. The conference theme is SENSE OF PLACE. The details of the same have already been forwarded to all members via email and have already been uploaded on the website. We look forward to your active participation.

• **STUDENTS WORKSHOP**

It is proposed to hold a Students event in November 2013 in Delhi. We will be writing to all colleges offering post-graduate courses in Landscape Architecture regarding the possibility of including this event in their academic calendar.

- **NEWSLETTER**

It is our endeavor to release a newsletter atleast twice a year. Sandip Patil, member of the current EC is in charge of the newsletter and we hope to release the next edition of the newsletter by October. I urge all members to contribute towards the newsletter by sending in professional news, events and relevant articles.

- **ISOLA AWARDS AND HONOURS**

The Indian Society of Landscape Architects has invited entries for the third cycle of ISOLA Awards for the year 2013.

Details have been emailed to all members as well as uploaded on the website.

The Awards and Honours will be presented to the winners at the next Annual Conference.

I would like to thank Varsha Gavandi for helping us in organising the Awards and Honours guidelines and schedules.

PROFESSIONAL ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED BY ISOLA

- **PROFESSIONAL FEES (Reference: POLICE MEMORIAL COMPETITION)**

We had reported last year that the National Architectural Design Competition for the National Police Memorial had tremendously helped in improving the visibility of ISOLA at the governmental level and had set a desirable precedent.

However, after committing to appoint the consultant as per Council of Architecture norms, the Ministry of Home Affairs offered to confirm the appointment at much lesser fees. They approached the 2nd and 3rd prize winners upon the 1st prize winner asking for fees as per the original commitment. Based on this background, the EC had the following recommendations:

- a. ISOLA should write to the Ministry of Home Affairs and demand a justification
- b. ISOLA should take legal advice/file an RTI to find out the facts of the matter
- c. ISOLA should also set up their own fee structure bearing in mind the nature of project, scale of project and the basic norms of the Council of Architecture

- **BYE LAWS OF THE SOCIETY**

The byelaws have been forwarded to the Charity Commissioner's office, however, due to the issues faced in updating the Society records, there has been a delay in getting the byelaws approved. However, we are hopeful of getting them registered at the earliest.

- **MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATES**

The new membership certificates for all the categories were ready and available at the Bhopal conference and were handed over to some of the members who attended. The remaining were sent by courier or speed post to all the members, but again, due to incorrect contact information, some have been returned back to the ISOLA office.

I once again request all members to update their contact information with ISOLA .

OTHER EVENTS / CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

• CHAPTER EVENTS

Mumbai Chapter hosted the first S.D.Vaidya Memorial Lecture on the 23rd of February 2013 at the Noshir Talati Auditorium of the Rachana Sansad's Academy of Architecture. Pradip Krishen was the invited speaker and he held the audience to rapt attention by his talk titled DYING TO LIVE - The Story of Rao Jodha Park.

The Delhi Chapter also organised an event titled "Confluence" on the 2nd March 2013 in collaboration with IUDI.

After the successful response to the NASA ISOLA Landscape Trophy in 2009 and 2010 edition of the trophy, ISOLA again conducted the Landscape trophy for the NASA convention at Gateway College, Sonapat in 2012 and had its members on the jury. We shall be continuing our association with the undergraduate students of architecture in the forthcoming NASA Convention at Hyderabad.

IN CONCLUSION....

Since our term has commenced only 5 months ago, it is too soon to comment on the performance of the Executive Council. However, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my team, especially Savita Punde and Rohit Marol for the experience and commitment that they bring to the Council and President Sachin Jain and Vice-President Yogesh Kapoor for the diligence and enthusiasm with which they approach their role in the EC.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank all ISOLA members, especially those who have made the effort to be present here today, for supporting and helping to achieve our stated goals. I end this address by once again requesting all members to whole-heartedly and proactively participate in all activities of the Society.

Shilpa Chandawarkar
Honorary Secretary, ISOLA
31.08.2013