

HOK and Biomimicry Guild Form Alliance to Integrate Nature's Innovations in the Design of Buildings, Communities and Cities Worldwide. Relationship will expand mainstream application of bio-inspired design; projects under way in India, with developing opportunities in North America and The Middle East.

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HOK and the Biomimicry Guild have forged a first-of-its-kind alliance linking the natural and built environment. This exclusive relationship between one of the world's largest architectural design firms and the only bio-inspired innovation company will integrate nature's innovations in the planning and design of buildings, communities and cities worldwide.

Established by biologists Janine Benyus and Dr. Dayna Baumeister in 1998, Biomimicry is a science that studies nature's best ideas and imitates these designs and processes to solve human problems. Biomimicry has inspired numerous commercial products and individual building projects, and the new alliance between the Biomimicry Guild and HOK has the potential to dramatically expand its scale and impact.

"Given the size, breadth and diversity of HOK's design practice, our firm can significantly influence the future generation of architecture, planning and interior design projects around the world," says HOK President Bill Hellmuth.

The built environment is the most fertile ground for biomimicry, according to Dayna Baumeister, PhD, co-founder of the Biomimicry Guild. "Buildings account for about 50% of total U.S. energy use, and our greatest collective impact will come from applying biomimicry to the planning and design of buildings, communities and cities – at every scale and in every region," she says.

HOK is uniquely positioned to expand the awareness and application of biomimicry within the built environment, advancing its long-standing commitment to sustainable design and innovation. The firm contributed to the development of the U.S. Green Building Council's original LEED® rating system, has adapted LEED to new building types and regions, and authored the influential HOK Guidebook to Sustainable Design.

"We believe biomimicry will not only help us significantly reduce the environmental impact of our projects, but also has the potential to help define a whole new sustainable standard for our profession," says HOK Sustainable Design Director Mary Ann Lazarus. "Because biomimicry addresses critical environmental issues at the habitat scale, it gives us lessons on how to achieve significant results – even restorative outcomes – at all scales."

The alliance represents a natural progression in the relationship between HOK and the Biomimicry Guild, which began in 2004. Both organizations have collaborated on several

projects, including HOK's participation in the 2008 "City of the Future" competition, sponsored by The History Channel, to design the city of Atlanta in 2108.

HOK and the Biomimicry Guild are currently working together to integrate biomimicry into the Lavasa hill station community under development near Pune, India, and are exploring potential project collaborations in Saudi Arabia and North America.

"Together with HOK, we are looking at what it means to be a bio-inspired company in the architecture space," says Biomimicry Guild Co-Founder Janine Benyus. "And I think the answer to that question is really going to be something new in the world. Because making a bio-inspired product is one thing; making a bio-inspired city begins to change the world."