



WDO INTERDESIGN
SIARGAO ISLAND 2026

Participants' Brief

**DESIGN INNOVATION AND
RESILIENCY FOR THE TROPICS**

13-24 July 2026

Siargao Island, Surigao del Norte

Philippines

Interdesign® is an initiative of

WDO WORLD
DESIGN
ORGANIZATION





01 Interdesign®

The Design Center of the Philippines has been selected by the World Design Organization (WDO)® to host the Interdesign 2026, with the theme **Design Innovation and Resiliency for the Tropics.**



The WDO Interdesign is a two-week intensive industrial design-led workshop that brings together professional designers and experts from around the world to collaborate on a local problem of international significance. Typically, 60-80 participants are selected, following a call for applications, half of which are from the host country and half from other countries. The majority of participants are industrial designers, though participants from other design disciplines, as well as young designers and outside experts may be invited to participate.

Interdesign workshops provide a unique professional development opportunity, rallying contributors from different countries and cultures to work together with local experts, exploring design issues and seeking innovative and appropriate solutions intended for implementation.

1971

1st Interdesign

2 weeks

Workshop

80

International & local designers & experts

45

Interdesigns since 1971

Past Interdesigns

1971	Minsk (Belarus) former USSR Production and Distribution of Bread	1985	Louvain-La-Neuve (Belgium) Design for Basic Medical Equipment for Developing Countries
1972	Kilkenny (Ireland) Design for Tourism	1986	Paris (France) Rendez-vous with Interactivity
1974	Kilkenny (Ireland) Design in the Post Office	1988	Esztergom (Hungary) Design and Information Technology
	Ontario (Canada) Industrial Design and Small Communities	1989	Kristiansund (Norway) Design for Elderly People
1975	Serfaus (Austria) Safety in Winter Sports, Local Identity at Serfaus		Toyama (Japan) Living with Water
	Bruges (Belgium) Urban Traffic on a Human Scale	1990	Nova Gorica (Yugoslavia) Living and Working Environment
1976	Northern Ireland The Designer and the Creation of Employment Opportunities	1991	Bled (Yugoslavia) Sports and Leisure
	Hong Kong Traditional Craft skills for Today's Industrial Society	1992	Inari (Finland) Source of Innovation
	Bombay (India) A New Generation of Urban Hardware	1993	Florianopolis (Brazil) Creative uses of Reforested Pinewood
1977	Kharkov (Ukraine) Design for the Aged and the Handicapped	1994	Bergslagen (Sweden) Transport for the Future
1978	Mexico City (Mexico) Utilization of Solar and Wind Energy		Bogotá (Colombia) Crafts as a Source of Interior Design
1979	Voss (Norway) Design for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises	1995	Launceston (Northern Tasmania) Sustainable development: The Design Imperatives
	Keszthely (Hungary) Design for Medical Purposes	1996	Ventspils (Latvia) Wood: Global Resource
	Vienna (Austria) Design Innovations for Sport and Recreation in summer for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises		Cuernavaca (Mexico) Design Strategies for Regional Development
	Dessau, Germany Playgrounds of Child Care Facilities	1999	Australia, Mexico and South Africa The First Simultaneous Interdesign Workshop: Water
1980	Tbilisi (USSR) Design for City Environment		Seoul (Korea) Design for Body and Mind
1981	Keszthely (Hungary) Industrial Design for Traffic Safety	2003	Santiago (Chile) Design for the Chilean Wine Industry: Challenges and Opportunities
1982	Nordkalotten Rovaniemi (Finland) Production Problems of the Northern Cap		Mexico City (Mexico) Crafts as a Tool for the Strategic Design Development
	Maastricht (Netherlands) Product Design for Handicapped Persons and Elderly People, Second Generation of Plastic Technology	2005	Rustenberg (South Africa) Sustainable Rural Transport - Technology for Developing Countries
1983	Baku (USSR) Design for Country Living	2006	Buenos Aires (Argentina) Retail Design "El Dorrego": Mercado de Diseño
1984	Furuvik (Sweden) Fun Fair of the Future	2007	Toronto (Canada) World House Interdesign Forum
1985	Paris, Aix-en Provence (France) Verre, transparence et lumière dans le cadre de vie	2009	Gällivare (Sweden) City Move
		2014	Mumbai (India) Humanising a Metropolis



02 Theme

Design Innovation and Resiliency for the Tropics

Siargao Island: A living laboratory for design innovation and resiliency for the tropics

Siargao Island, an island facing the Pacific Ocean located in the southern part of the Philippines, is both an ecological treasure and an emerging economic hub—driven largely by micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (or MSMEs) that are increasingly threatened by the intensifying impacts of climate change.

The island is renowned for its exceptional and legally protected biodiversity, being home to the country's richest mangrove forests and endangered species such as sea cows, saltwater crocodiles, and the Philippine tarsier.

At the same time, the island's location along the typhoon corridor puts it on the frontlines of climate risk. Experiencing an average of around 20 typhoons each year, recurrent disasters such as Typhoon Rai / Odette in 2021 have disrupted enterprises, damaged infrastructure, and strained supply chains across key local economic sectors.

For MSMEs, which form the backbone of the island's economy, these conditions present both as critical challenge and strategic opportunity to build resilient tropical communities through design innovation.

They underscore the urgent need to strengthen business continuity, diversify enterprise and livelihood opportunities, and redesign the island's systems in ways that are context-specific, inclusive, resilient,



and environmentally responsible. At the same time, Siargao's strong community of local stakeholders create a powerful platform for piloting design-led innovations—from nature-based products and services and climate-adaptive business practices to circular economy models—that not only can shape Siargao Island's competitive advantage, but can also be scaled to other island communities in the Philippines and around the world.

Siargao Island represents one of the critical challenges of our time: sustaining a productive local economy while building resilient communities in the face of the escalating climate crisis—making it an ideal living laboratory for design innovation and resiliency for the tropics.

A dual crisis

Siargao Island faces a dual crisis: climate vulnerability, due to its geographical location along the Pacific and the challenges of rapid growth brought by a surge in tourism.

These dimensions reinforce each other: tourism generates waste and strains infrastructure, climate disasters threaten local tourism and way of life, leaving residents vulnerable to external shocks.



The alarming climate crisis and the need for a more resilient economy, through design innovation

According to the Global Report on Internal Displacement 2019, disasters triggered more than 17.2 million new displacements across 125 countries and territories in 2018. This means that disasters displace three to ten times more people than conflicts and wars worldwide.

MSMEs are often considered to be more vulnerable to disasters given their

limited resources and risk management mechanisms compared to large firms. Moreover, MSMEs in developing countries also have additional characteristics that can exacerbate their vulnerability.

These impacts are also not gender-neutral. Women are overrepresented in sectors most exposed to disaster-related disruption, with unpaid care burdens and risks of gender-based violence tend to increase during crises and women often facing higher job losses in the aftermath of disasters.



Improvement initiatives

Siargao Island is a legislated protected area under the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018 with its implementation guided by the Siargao Island Protected Landscape and Seascape (SIPLAS) Management Plan 2021-2030, providing a strong policy foundation for conservation efforts.

There is also an active ecosystem of support on the ground from partners such as the Spanish Agency for Interna-

tional Development Cooperation, United Nations Development Programme, and Siargao Environmental Awareness Movement among others.

While these initiatives provide a vital foundation, the complexity of Siargao Island's situation demands a more integrated, cross-disciplinary approach. Interdesign plugs into this existing energy, translating high-level policy into tangible, design-led solutions.

The design challenge

The main design challenge that will be addressed through Interdesign Siargao Island 2026 is:

How might we reimagine Siargao Island as a resilient, circular, and sustainable tropical island ecosystem through design innovation?



The design residency will use the island's dynamic context as its living laboratory to develop context-specific, inclusive, and implementable solutions—strengthening MSME and livelihood resilience, advancing circular economy systems, improving disaster preparedness and business sustainability, and safeguarding the natural ecosystems that shape and protect the island.

Potential thematic areas include:

Circular Economy Transformation

Zero-waste systems and material innovation for island economies to create sustainable value chains that prioritize local skills over traditional tourism.

Climate Resilience & Disaster Preparedness

Design-led infrastructure and spatial strategies that empower tropical communities to adapt to and recover from extreme weather events.

Ecosystem Restoration & Protection

Nature-based interventions and community tools to protect critical coastal and marine environments through scalable, science-driven design.

Sustainable and Resilient MSMEs & Communities

Inclusive, resilient, and productive economic models that can shape local competitive advantage and at the same time promote social well-being and equitable local participation.



Outcome and objectives

To demonstrate how humanity-centered design can translate complex environmental, economic, and social challenges into inclusive, context-responsive solutions.

Program objective

To convene a multidisciplinary ecosystem in Siargao Island using design as a living laboratory to co-create scalable, climate-resilient, and sustainable solutions with lasting policy, community, and knowledge impact beyond 2026 Interdesign.

Learning objective

To deepen participants' understanding of climate-vulnerable island and coastal contexts, build their capacity to apply design skills alongside multidisciplinary teams, and create a conducive learning environment that delivers both meaningful outcomes and a positive delegate experience.

Thematic objective

To strengthen climate resilience, ecosystem stewardship, circular economy transformation, and sustainable livelihoods in Siargao Island and other island/tropical communities.

03 Participation

Call to Participate

WDO and the Design Center welcome the application of eligible designers from around the world. Designers, researchers, architects, planners, strategists, creatives, and professionals from diverse fields who are eager to collaborate, learn, and contribute to impactful design outcomes are strongly encouraged to apply.

Selected designers will collaborate directly from international design experts, thematic advisers, and local knowledge holders through workshops, field immersion, and guided design sessions. Interdesign fosters a collaborative environment where participants from diverse disciplines work alongside one another, exchange perspectives, and expand their professional practice while developing meaningful, context-responsive design concepts. Beyond skill-building, participants become part of a global design network committed to socially and environmentally responsible innovation.

The host will provide hotel accommodation, meals, and local transportation throughout the residency period. Necessary international and domestic flights to and from Siargao Island shall be the responsibility of participants, alongside any travel or health insurance they wish to obtain.

Participation in the Interdesign workshop is voluntary and participants will not receive any form of payment for taking part.



Ownership

Due to the collaborative contributions in the Interdesign process, all shared knowledge and produced design concepts become the shared intellectual property of all participating designers. Rights to any designs remain vested in the participant group collectively, unless such designs are already part of the public domain. Each participant should understand that any designs or intellectual property that results from the Interdesign process, will remain the collective property of all the participants.

In addition, the distribution and/or transfer of intellectual or industrial property rights shall be agreed upon on a case-by-case basis, between the participants or between the participants and any prospective producers or marketers of products or services developed in the Interdesign.

Further information on ownership and intellectual property will be provided to you in your participant briefing upon acceptance of your application.

04 Timeline

Schedule and Critical Dates*

04 February 2026

Start of participant applications

11 February 2026

08:00, Eastern Standard Time

Info webinar on Interdesign Siargao Island 2026

31 March 2026

23:59, Eastern Daylight Time

Deadline of participant applications

08-30 April 2026

Review of received applications

May 2026

Announcement of successful applicants

Online briefing with the successful applicants

13-24 July 2026


Philippine Standard Time

Interdesign Siargao Island 2026 programme proper

July-August 2026

Post-residency impact check-ins with the participants and beneficiaries

**Subject to change. Any movements on the timeline will be communicated immediately once finalized.*



Make waves of impact with us.

*Join us in this transformational journey
toward more innovative and resilient
tropical communities in the Philippines
and around the world, through
humanity-centered design.*

Interdesign Siargao Island 2026

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For more information, please contact
InterdesignPH@designcenter.gov.ph.



About the Design Center

The Design Center of the Philippines is a government agency under the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) of the Philippines, mandated to promote the use of design as a tool in strengthening the national competitiveness of Philippine products and services, and in empowering Filipino micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, and designers for the local and global markets.

Guided by the Filipino value of *kapwa* (shared identity), Design Center is at the forefront of pushing a national design agenda that is in the service of all— influencing lifestyles, humanizing processes, maximizing function, and transforming public service for economic progress to uplift the quality of life.

The Design Center also gathers design and creative communities to build meaningful partnerships among designers, innovators, industry leaders, key influencers, and policymakers to inspire them in creating humanity-centered products, services, spaces, and policies that enable sustainable and inclusive economic development.

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About WDO

The World Design Organization (WDO)[®], formerly known as the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (Icsid), is a globally recognized non-governmental organization that aims to promote and advance the discipline of industrial design and its power to enhance economic, social, cultural and environmental quality of life.

Founded in 1957, WDO services over 200 member organizations around the world, engaging thousands of individual designers through our innovative programming and initiatives that champion 'design for a better world'.

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