

ARENA CONSULTANTS

TRAILBLAZING LABORATORY DESIGN WITH OVER TWO DECADES OF SPECIALIZED EXPERTISE AND INNOVATION

The market for architectural interior design consultancy in research laboratories in India has expanded significantly, offering immense scope for growth. Research labs are distinct from other sectors like pathological labs or commercial spaces due to their focus on innovation and handling unknown, potentially hazardous materials. The design of these labs demands a high degree of safety and functionality, ensuring that researchers can work without risk. Lab spaces must be meticulously planned where every element serves a purpose. Since the pandemic, demand for these specialized facilities has surged, driven by the need for on-site research, and private and public initiatives promoting self-reliance. This has opened up substantial opportunities for design firms to cater to this growing sector.



This is where Arena Consultants, with its expertise in lab design, plays a crucial role. Arena Consultants is a specialized architectural interior design consultancy firm with a primary focus on designing research and development spaces, particularly laboratories. Unlike many architectural firms that handle a diverse range of projects, Arena Consultants has dedicated itself exclusively to lab



Archana Salil
Founder & Principal Architect

design, developing unparalleled expertise in this niche. With over 20 years of experience, the firm has successfully completed approximately 3.2 million square feet of lab projects, including both greenfield and interior designs. This specialization has positioned the firm as a unique player in the Indian market, attracting significant interest from top-tier MNCs and leading Indian companies.

“Our strong expertise in lab design continues to drive a consistent flow of exciting projects, allowing us to focus on

what we do best while confidently advancing without the need to explore other sectors like residential or hospitality. Our strong portfolio and reputation are testaments to our commitment to excellence in this highly specialized field”, adds Archana Salil, Founder & Principal Architect.



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Addressing Diverse Client Needs and Standards

When companies seek the expertise of Arena Consultants, they often come with limited architectural or engineering knowledge. Their primary concern is establishing a suitable research environment, such as pilot plants, chemistry labs, analytical or micro labs. Typically, these clients only have a rudimentary understanding of their needs, such as requiring table space or assembly areas, and look to Arena Consultants to delineate the necessary infrastructure. The firm's role is to guide these clients in choosing between a greenfield project, a bare shell space, or retrofitting an existing facility, starting with a comprehensive understanding of their objectives and intentions for the lab.

Each sector has distinct lab requirements. For instance, government institutions like IITs have specific needs due to their focus on advanced research and student education. Arena Consultants advises these educational institutions on adhering to current Indian standards and market trends, while considering the long-term sustainability of the facility, as these labs often remain in use for decades without major modifications.

Conversely, private sector clients, including multinational corporations, require labs that meet both Indian regulations and international standards. Arena Consultants ensures that lab designs are aligned with US, European and other global standards to accommodate international teams. These clients emphasize the need for state-of-the-art facilities, modern work environments, and sustainability certifications, such as green building or green interior certifications.

By thoroughly understanding the client's background and specific needs, Arena Consultants ensures that each lab design is compliant with relevant standards and codes, including the National Building Code (NBC), Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), and local development control rules. This meticulous approach guarantees tailored, forward-looking designs that align with the client's goals and investment considerations, delivering exceptional outcomes in laboratory infrastructure.

Strategic Growth and Future Roadmap

Since its inception in 2005, Arena Consultants has focused on carving out a unique niche in the architectural industry. With over 3 decades of experience, Archana Salil initially gained substantial expertise in the field before launching the firm. Recognizing a distinct opportunity in laboratory design, the firm specialized in this area, which was relatively underdeveloped at the time. This focus has allowed the firm to develop deep expertise and a strong reputation in designing laboratories for various sectors, including chemical, pharmaceutical, food, textile, space research, electronics, mechanical and automotive industries.



Looking ahead, Arena Consultants plans to continue its specialization in lab design and expanding in this sector only. Characterized by increased R&D investment, regulatory reforms, digital transformation, and a focus on self-reliance and sustainability there are huge opportunities available in this sector. The firm aims to expand its knowledge and address new challenges within the laboratory space, reflecting the diverse and evolving needs of its clients. By staying committed to its core competency, the firm is diversifying into new service verticals, adopting new technology that will enhance design process and client communication. “We continue to lay our emphasis on deepening our expertise and adapting to the ever-changing demands of laboratory environments, ensuring continued growth and success in this specialized field”, concludes Archana Salil. **PO**



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Sudhakar Singh

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Managing Editor
India Pharma Outlook