The proof of concept is a research-based analysis by Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar, Center for Research in Design to evaluate the feasibility of converting surplus ISO shipping containers into housing units for migrant workers in the State of Qatar.

The project addresses the need for temporary labor accommodation associated with Qatar’s rapid growth and development. The goal for this project is to identify a long-term, economical solution to this social challenge in support of Qatar’s National Vision 2030 toward sustainable development.

The proof of concept evolved from its initial mandate of evaluating the feasibility of converting shipping containers for migrant worker housing into an enhanced scope of work that demonstrates how the results of our research could be used to develop a unique and innovative concept for ‘A Portable Architecture for Qatar’. This expanded agenda not only addresses the original mandate but also demonstrates the value of a holistic design approach. ‘A Portable Architecture for Qatar’ examines and identifies sustainable, economic options for application in urban, rural and remote construction site locations in Qatar and possibly for application as disaster relief where needed worldwide.

The vision of ‘A Portable Architecture for Qatar’ is to plan, design, prototype and commercialize a manufacturing system that combines best management practices of integrated, sustainable design with innovative planning concepts to serve the growing market for migrant worker housing in Qatar. ‘A Portable Architecture for Qatar’ is based on a business model that demonstrates cost effectiveness through reduced operating costs because of an integrated design approach. The concept is intended to meet and surpass international standards for migrant workers living conditions.

Taking the lead in this challenge will not only improve the lives of migrant workers but will also place Qatar in the forefront of improving the Gulf-wide image of human rights.