

# BECOMING A WORLD DESIGN CAPITAL

Guide for cities interested in bidding for WDC 2030

**WDO** WORLD  
DESIGN  
ORGANIZATION

September 2026





**This guide aims to provide the design community with the tools to begin the journey towards becoming a WDC. We'll answer:**

- What is World Design Capital?
- Impacts of hosting WDC
- The benefits of bidding
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Next steps in the 2030 bidding cycle

# What is a World Design Capital?

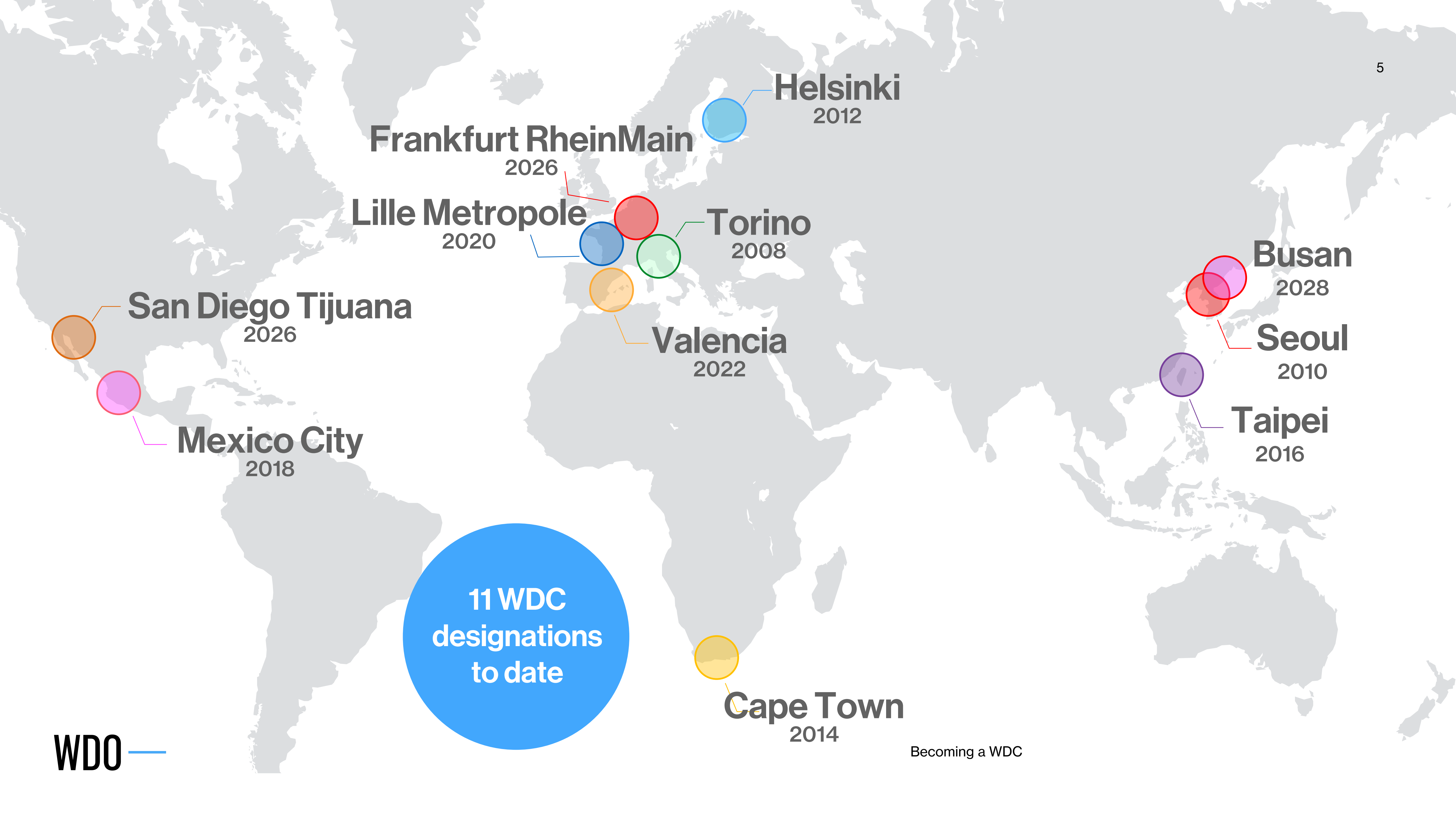


A large, dense crowd of people walking on a city street, illustrating the theme of urban population. The crowd is diverse in age and appearance, filling the entire frame. In the upper right, a blue circular pedestrian crossing sign is visible. The overall atmosphere is one of a busy, crowded urban environment.

**Today, nearly half the world's population —  
over 3.7 billion people — lives in cities.**

World Design Capital advances new design strategies that address complex urban challenges and position design as a catalyst for social innovation, sustainability, and democratic life.





**Helsinki**  
2012

**Frankfurt RheinMain**  
2026

**Lille Metropole**  
2020

**Torino**  
2008

**Valencia**  
2022

**San Diego Tijuana**  
2026

**Mexico City**  
2018

**Busan**  
2028

**Seoul**  
2010

**Taipei**  
2016

**Cape Town**  
2014

**11 WDC  
designations  
to date**



# Impacts of hosting WDC



**WDC is a social project  
in which design plays a key role.**

**WDC is a design project  
that also has social impact.**





Chief Design Officer role  
created 2016

Design embedded across city  
services

WDO —



WDC Cape Town 2014 hosted over  
460 co-designed neighbourhood  
projects and generated 2.46 ZAR  
for every 1 ZAR invested



## Impact of hosting WDC



**Integrated design into urban renewal, transport, sustainability**

**TDRI City Design Index quantifies design's impact on economic, social, and environmental performance**

**WDO —**

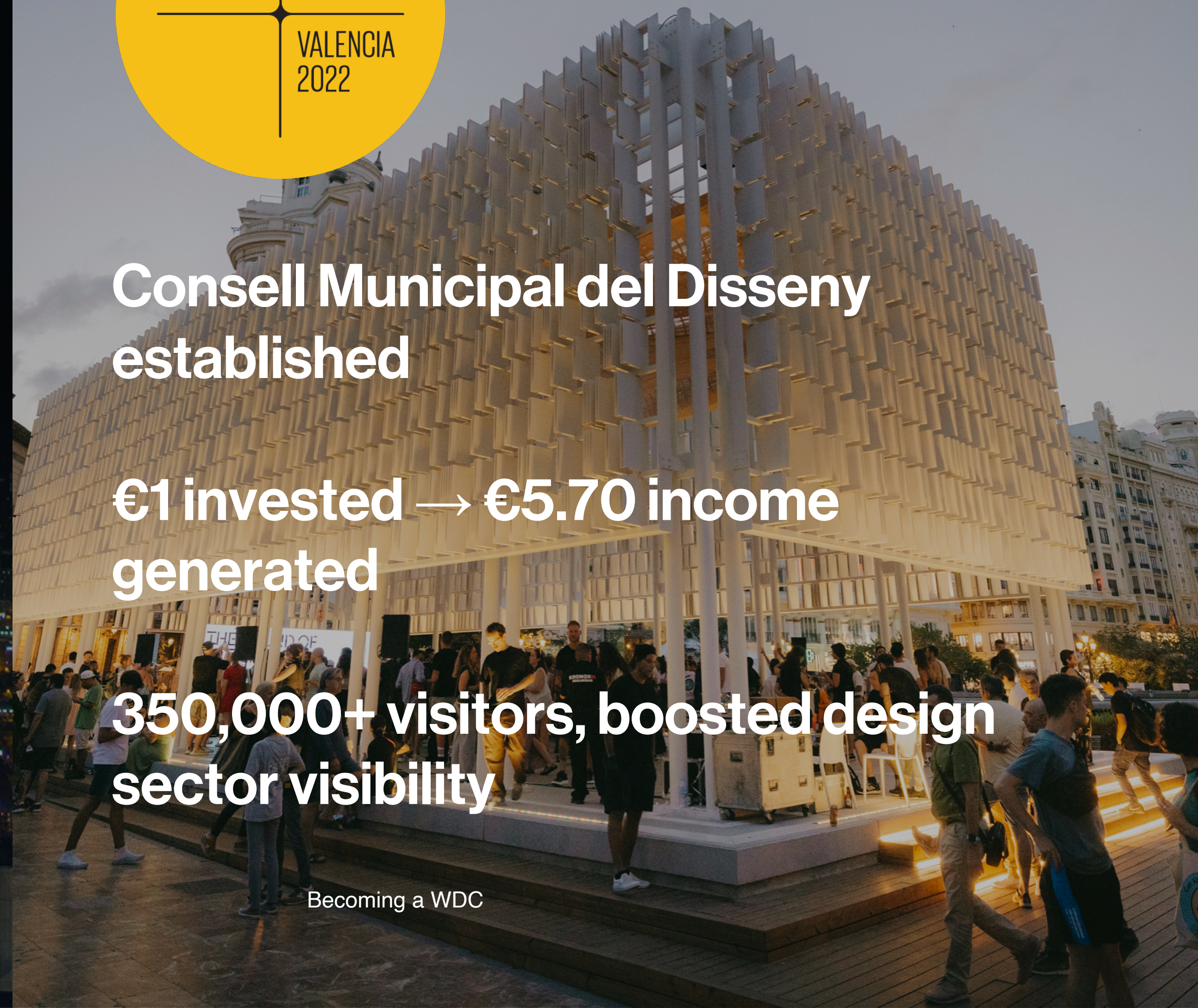


**Consell Municipal del Disseny established**

**€1 invested → €5.70 income generated**

**350,000+ visitors, boosted design sector visibility**

Becoming a WDC





Impact of hosting WDC



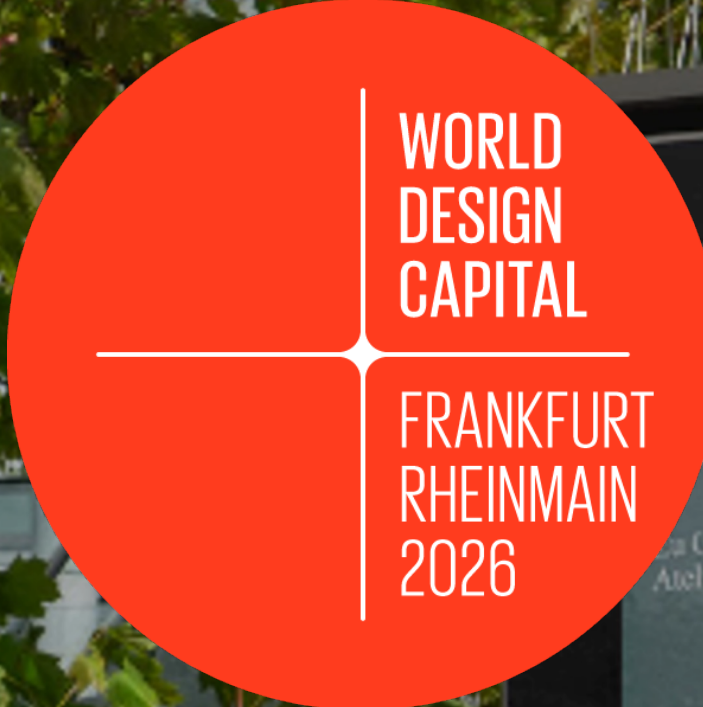
First binational WDC

\$1 invested → \$9.20 ROI

1 million+ event attendees

1,804 full-time jobs created

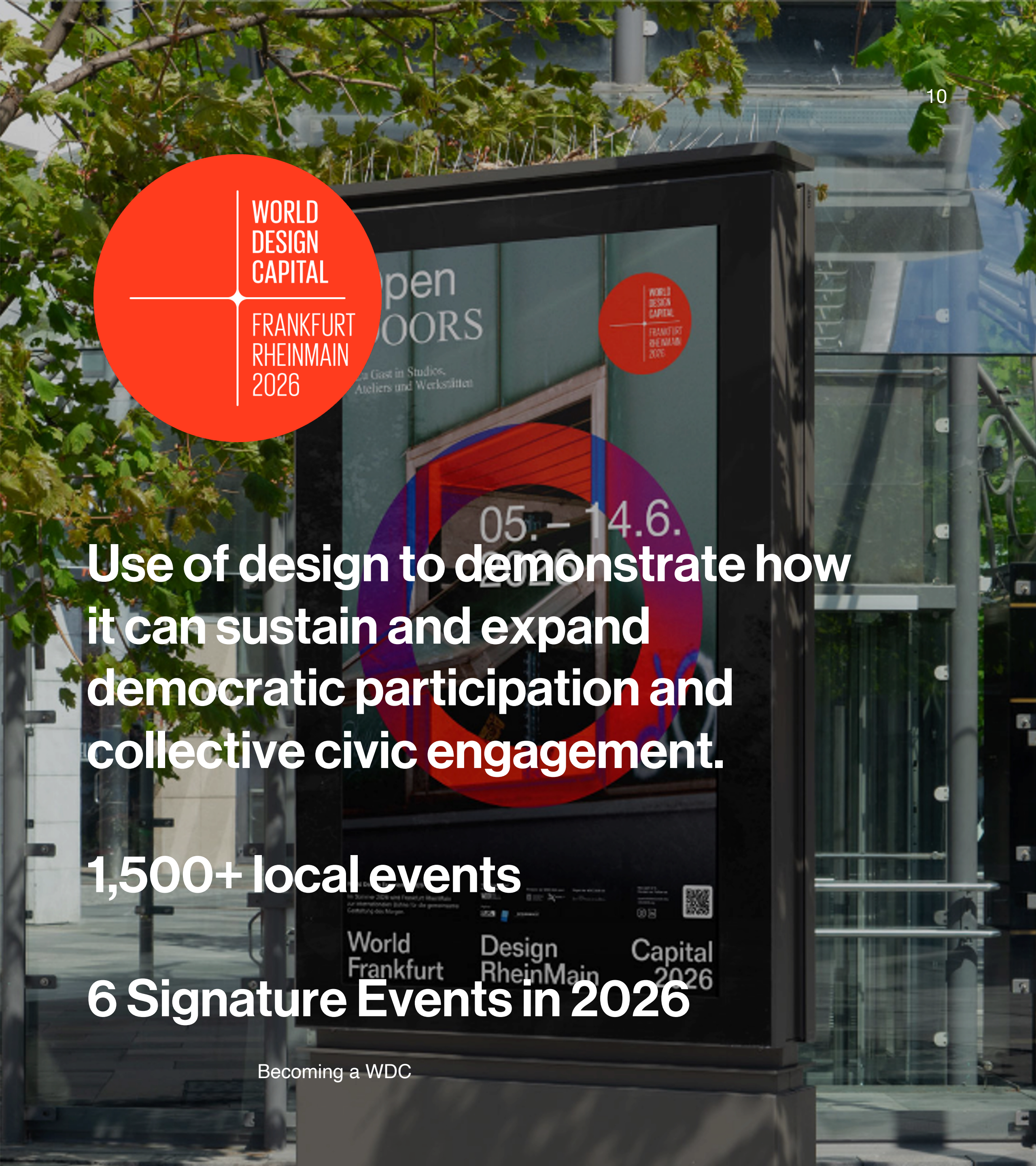
WDO —



Use of design to demonstrate how it can sustain and expand democratic participation and collective civic engagement.

1,500+ local events

6 Signature Events in 2026





# FROM TRADITION TO TRANSFORMATION

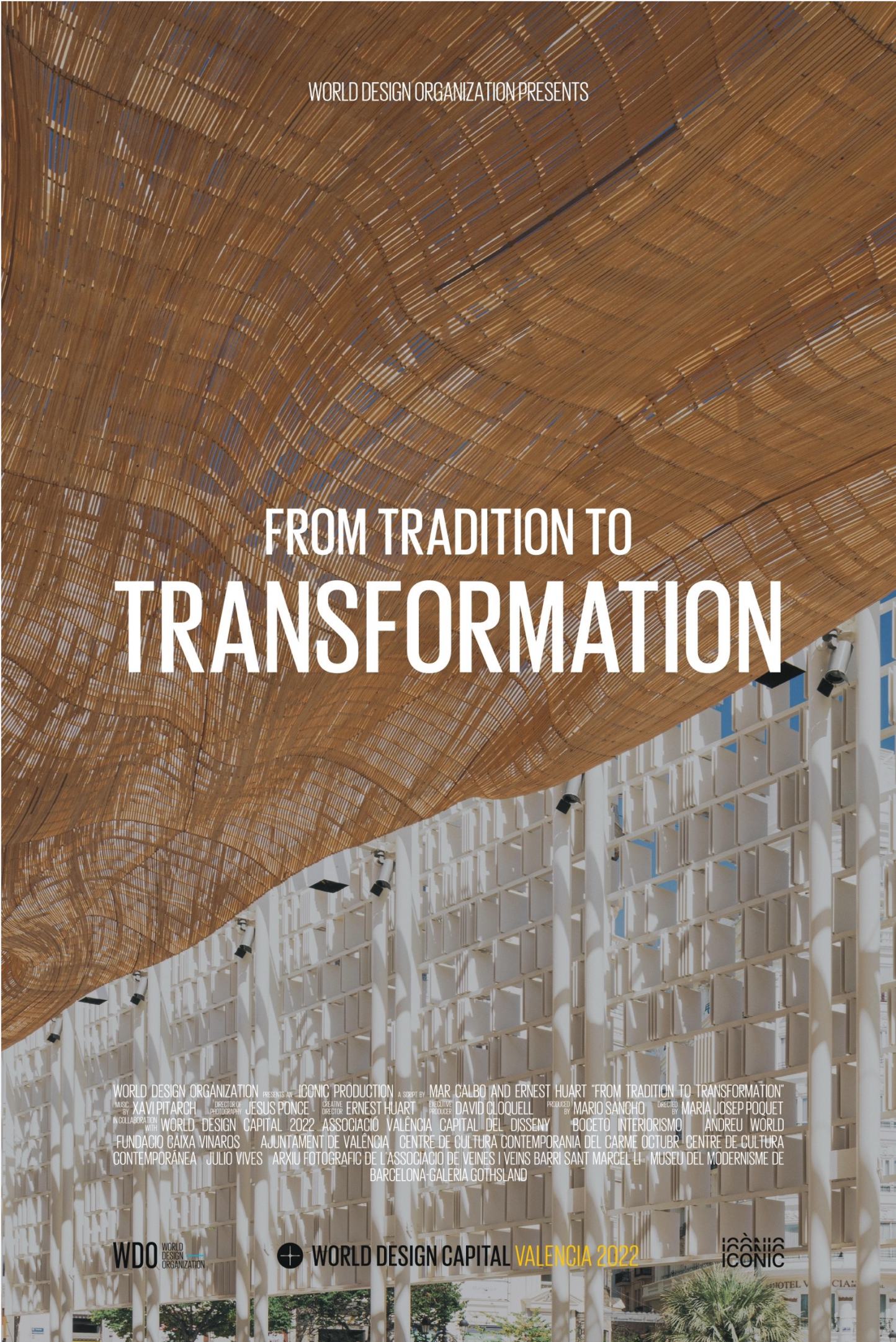
WORLD DESIGN CAPITAL VALENCIA 2022

WDO —



Becoming a WDC





Becoming a WDC



# Benefits of bidding





**Mobilizing your design community** towards achieving a common goal



**Exposing government to design thinking** and innovation in city development



**Creating positive return on investment** as the city has a better understanding of its design ecosystem and all the ways design contributes to quality of life in the city



**Developing skills required for collaboration** between designers and leaders in government



**Building new connections** between government and design-related industries

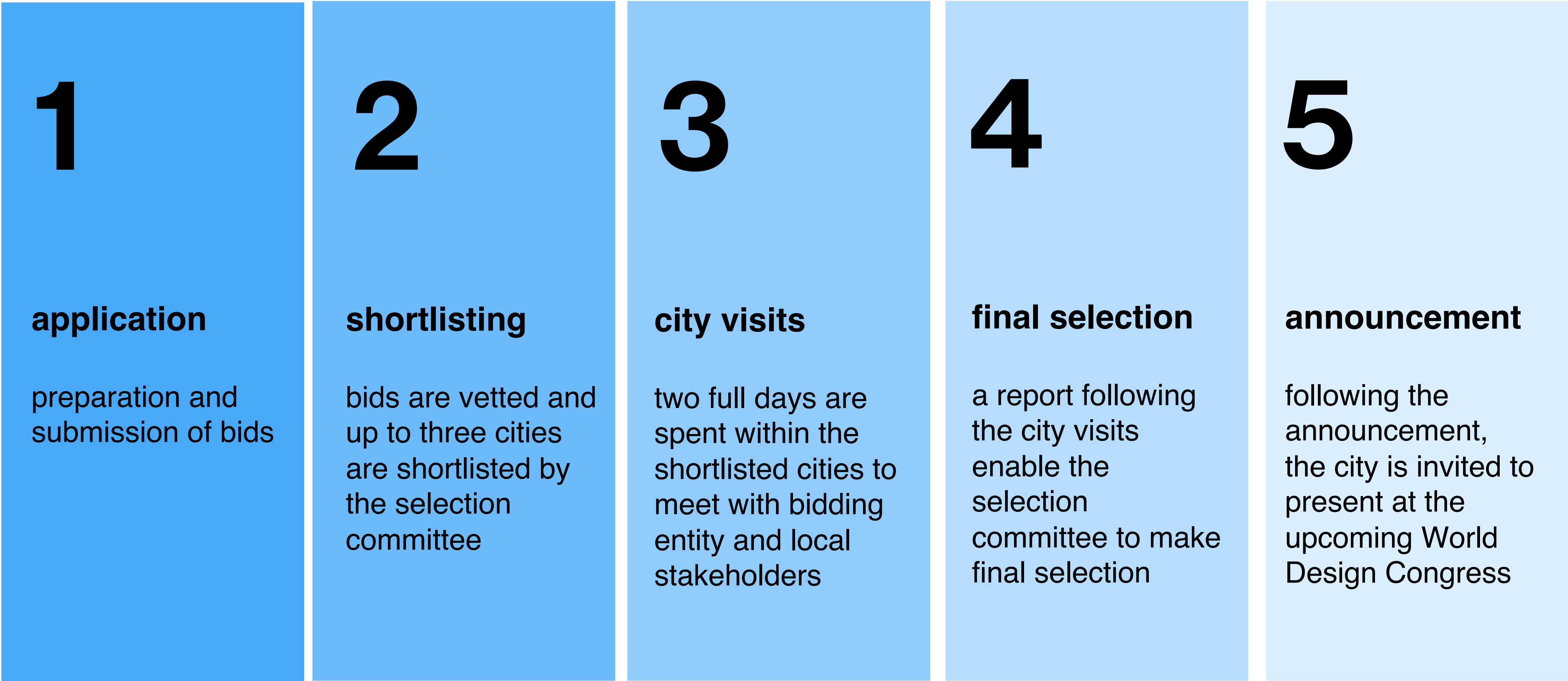


**Fostering citizen pride** and opportunity for community building



# WDC bidding cycle







## 5 criteria of a strong bid

1

**Strong support and mobilization from the local design community**, eager to foster a conversation around design's impact on a city

2

**A relevant theme** that is forward looking and embraces design as solutions-oriented

3

**An ambitious programme** that will engage designers and non-designers

4

**Commitment within the local government** to build capacity within the design community and engage with large sectors of the population and visitors

5

**Vision** to build on the momentum of World Design Capital and pursue urban revitalization through design



# Frequently Asked Questions



## Where do we begin building a bid?

Start by connecting with designers in your local community or city. Is there a professional or promotional design association that might want to hear more and help build a bid committee and sketch an outline of how a WDC year might look?

Check to see if there are [WDO Members](#) near you that might support the bid process.



## Who can submit a bid?

World Design Capital is open to any city, large or small. The bid must be formally submitted by an autonomous agency typically not be from within a level of government of the bidding city.

However, the support of the local government is essential. The mayor of the Host City has a key role to play before, during and beyond the designated year.



# Can a bid be submitted by a government department?

Collaboration with government partners is important, but ideally are not the primary partners putting forth the bid.



## Who evaluates the bids?

An **organizing committee** manages the bid process, supports contract compliance and reviews all bids for completion and ensures an impartial process.

The **selection committee** reviews and assesses all bids based on evaluation criteria, determines the shortlist and makes the final selection.



# What's a letter of guarantee and why do we need to include one in the bid?

The Letter of Guarantee or Letter of Credit guarantees financial support and commitment to the programme by confirming the budgeted amount allotted to a WDC.



# Who participates in the city visits?

The city visits are performed by 2-3 members of the WDC Organizing Committee.



## How much should a city budget for WDC?

There is no magic number, each city will have a different benchmark. As a start, interested cities should consider a range of 10-15 million Euros, which includes a management fee of 630,000 Euros over three installments.

There is also a bidding fee of 10,000 Euros and an administrative fee for shortlisted cities of 30,000 Euros.



# How much of the budget should come from government sources?

A good target to consider would be a 60/40 split, with the majority coming from public funding. The government contribution to the budget should be sufficient to cover implementation of all WDC Signature Events and management of the standalone entity (Organizing Lead).



# When do cities have to sign the HCA and can we request changes?

Cities will receive a copy of the HCA for signature once they have been notified that they have signed the NDA. Changes to the HCA are not permitted.



# Why do we need to create a standalone entity?

The standalone entity or Organizing Lead is required to guarantee sufficient space and resources to implement a programme of events.



# How does WDO measure the success of a WDC?

The impact and success of a WDC is measured by the Impact Study and Closeout Study, as well as ongoing dialogue with stakeholders at all levels in the designated city.



# How does WDO measure the success of a bid?

Successful WDC bids answer all the application questions clearly and in full, share a clear vision for the WDC year, and engage a variety of local stakeholders.

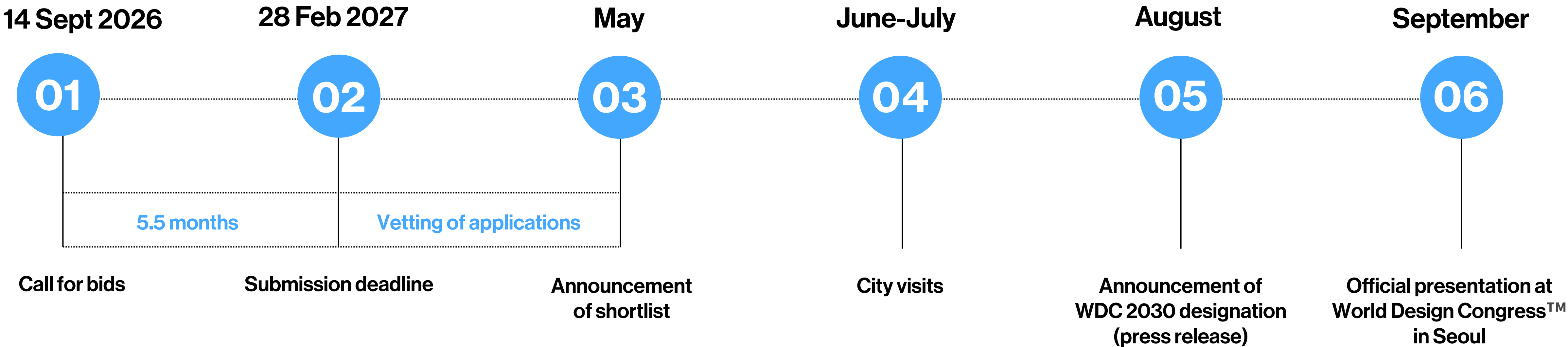


# WDC 2030

## key dates



# 2026-2027





# Final tips





Start early & submit early



Answer and address each application question with care



Share your questions with WDO



Develop a clear vision for WDC in your city



Consider the desired outcomes of WDC for your city after 2030



Enjoy the process

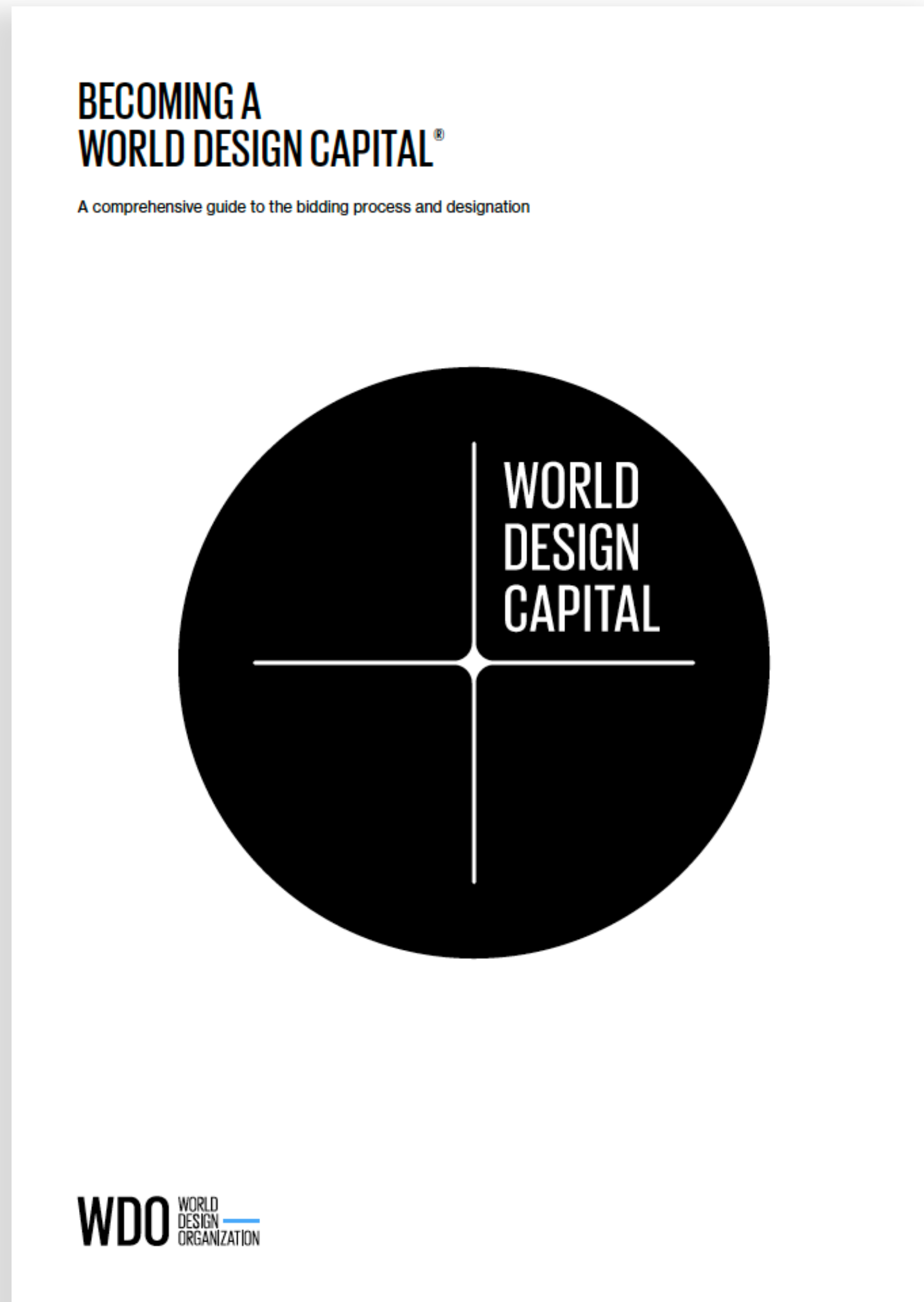


Submit PDF and video files only



Connect with previous WDCs





## Important resource

Our [Becoming a WDC guide](#) provides more information on how to start building your bid, what it means to be shortlisted, and the resources required if designated.





Ready to get started or need more information?



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