

BECOMING A WORLD DESIGN CAPITAL®

An overview
of the application process





I THINK DESIGN
IS CONSIDERATION,
COMMUNICATION,
CULTURE, LEISURE,
PLEASURE
AND ECONOMY.

SO, IF I PUT IT INTO
ONE SENTENCE:
DESIGN IS EVERYTHING.

WHAT IS WORLD DESIGN CAPITAL?

With more than half the world's population now living in cities, design has become an increasingly fundamental tool for making cities more attractive, competitive, efficient, livable, and sustainable.

The World Design Capital® (WDC) is designated every two years by World Design Organization (WDO)® to recognize a city's innovative use of design to strengthen economic, social, cultural and environmental development. Through a year-long programme of design-related events, WDC provides a platform to showcase best practices in design-led urban policy and innovation, increase civic engagement, as well as attract business and tourism.

First launched in Torino (Italy) in 2008, WDC has also been awarded to Seoul (South Korea) in 2010, Helsinki (Finland) in 2012, Cape Town (South Africa) in 2014, Taipei (Chinese Taipei) in 2016, Mexico City (Mexico) in 2018, Lille Metropole (France) in 2020. Valencia (Spain) is WDC 2022 and the cities of San Diego (USA) and Tijuana (Mexico) have been designated the first biennial WDC for 2024.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE WDC PROGRAMME?

- **Showcase a designated city's use of design to reinvent itself and improve the quality of life of its citizens**
- **Promote a city and its design community on the international stage**
- **Increase public awareness of the power of design to strengthen economic, social, cultural and environmental development**
- **Inspire other cities to use design as a strategic tool to grow and prosper**
- **Create an international network where cities share best practices in innovative design**
- **Ensure a design legacy flourishes in a designated city long after the WDC year ends.**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR A CITY TO RECEIVE THE WDC DESIGNATION?

A city that becomes a World Design Capital can expect to:

- **Gain visibility as a hub of creativity and innovation**
- **Attract investment, tourism and civic pride**
- **Strengthen economic development**
- **Improve the quality of life of its citizens**
- **Position itself as an international leader in design**
- **Build its global image**
- **Join an international network of design-effective cities.**



WORLD DESIGN CAPITAL
TOLD THE STORY
OF OUR REGION'S IDENTITY,
EXAMINING ITS HISTORY,
INDUSTRIAL TRADITION
AND BUSINESS THROUGH
THE LENS OF DESIGN
AND USED DESIGN TO
PRESENT THE LOCAL REGION
IN A FRESH LIGHT.

THE WDC NETWORK OF CITIES

Since its inception in 2008, the World Design Capital programme has accumulated many success stories and achievements. A global network of cities is emerging, facilitating dialogue and knowledge sharing about the power of design to tackle some of the world's biggest challenges.



WDC TORINO 2008

As the first World Design Capital, Torino (Italy) was recognized as a prominent city of design, attracting new investment, bringing increased visibility to the city and creating a model of urban public/private networking that has impacted public administration, businesses, designers, thought leaders, schools and citizens.



WDC SEOUL 2010

Seoul's (South Korea) status as WDC in 2010 increased its brand value to KRW 890 billion (US 800 million) and led to the creation of the Dongdaemun Design Plaza (DDP), now a major urban development landmark of South Korea. It also helped the city to reach no. 9 on the 2010 Global Urban Competitiveness Index.



WDC HELSINKI 2012

Over 90 % of Helsinki citizens recognized the City's WDC 2012 designation, with two thirds of the population taking part in WDC 2012 activities. For Helsinki, WDC 2012 introduced design as a permanent and significant component of the city's development, leading to the hiring of the city's first Chief Design Officer. Helsinki has continued its pursuit of design-led urban planning with a renewed waterfront, renovated museums, and revived industrial spaces.



WDC CAPE TOWN 2014

As the first African city to take on the WDC designation, Cape Town democratized design, showcasing the value of design thinking and participatory design processes at the neighbourhood level, touching thousands of people in over 81 of the 111 Wards. For every Rand spent on WDC 2014, Cape Town generated another 2.46 Rand. Cape Town was also named no. 1 of 52 places to visit on The New York Times 2014 list.



WDC TAIPEI 2016

As WDC 2016, the city of Taipei aimed to make design thinking a driver of the city's development, showcasing to neighbouring cities and the world their reinvigorated urban landscape, sophisticated transit system, specialized medical care, bustling cultural infrastructure, and community-based urban regeneration projects. A city with limited resources, Taipei adopted the theme 'Adaptive City – Design in Motion', to demonstrate the ways cities can adapt to meet citizen's demands, using design-led innovation to raise citizens' quality of life.



WDC MEXICO CITY 2018

As the first city from the Americas to receive the WDC designation, Mexico City's vibrant design community worked to inspire other megacities around the world through a programme that, focused on the impact of socially responsible design on the life of a city.



WDC LILLE METROPOLE 2020

Lille Metropole, once an industrial centre facing economic upheaval, is now an intellectual, cultural, socioeconomic and creative development hub of significance within the sub-region of France. From the Maison POCs, physical spaces of public display and discovery focusing on various themes – collaborative city, circular economy, housing – to a number of colourful design exhibitions hosted throughout the region, to virtual gatherings and panels, Lille Metropole demonstrated the transformative power of placing design at the heart of a city.



WDC VALENCIA 2022

Valencia is a culturally vibrant port city with a long-standing legacy of design. Located on the south-east coast of Spain, it is emerging a leader as the city infuses design throughout public policy and in public space. As the eighth designated WDC, Valencia aims to empower citizens and engage the local and international design community as well as those new to design.

From its Agora, a stunning pavillion in the centre of the city, to its design map that outlines 100 creative projects in different neighbourhoods, Valencia has brought together the design community at a crucial time post-pandemic.



WDC SAN DIEGO TIJUANA 2024

The cities of San Diego (USA) and Tijuana (Mexico) have been named World Design Capital 2024 as a result of their commitment to human-centered design and legacy of cross-border collaboration to transform the region's natural and built environments.

This is the first time a binational region has been designated World Design Capital, due to the strength of their bid that demonstrated their mobilization of design to transform the lives of 7.1 million inhabitants across the busiest land border in the Western Hemisphere.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR SELECTING A WDC?

- **A city's existing design assets**
- **A city's plans for using design to renew itself**
- **The ways in which citizens benefit from the use of design in city planning**
- **The capacity to organize and finance a year-long programme of design events**
- **The mobilization and participation of the wider design community and large sectors of the population and visitors**
- **The fostering of a wider dialogue on urban revitalization strategies.**





WDC WILL HELP US ENSURE
DESIGN PERMEATES
ACROSS ALL ASPECTS OF
OUR MEGALOPOLIS,
SINCE IT IS ONLY THROUGH
DESIGN THAT WE CAN
ACHIEVE REAL CHANGE.

WDC SIGNATURE EVENTS

Every World Design Capital identifies and develops a year-long programme of unique design events, relevant to their city and their citizens, and which sets out to achieve local objectives while attracting both at-home audiences and international visitors and press.

In addition to local events, each WDC also organizes seven WDC Signature Events in partnership with WDO:

WDC Signing Ceremony

The WDC Signing Ceremony is an opportunity for the designated city to invite key stakeholders, including government officials, the design community, local media, and business to witness and celebrate the official signing of the WDC Host City Agreement. It is the first official WDC event and the only WDC signature event held outside the designated year, usually in the first quarter of the year following the official announcement of the designated WDC City. The WDC Signing Ceremony is an opportunity to celebrate those who developed the bid, as well as to shine a spotlight on the best and the brightest of the incoming WDC Host City's design community. The event also helps build citizen pride in the accomplishment of the city.

World Design Street Festival

The World Design Street Festival is the kick-off celebration to the WDC Calendar Year. Festivities are experience-driven and focus on building citizen excitement and engagement for the year to come, fostering civic pride in achieving the WDC designation and increasing public awareness of the importance of design in improving citizens' lives. This is an opportunity to engage as many people as possible, including international visitors, to experience design activities in person through concerts, public design workshops, exhibitions, or design studio open houses. Recommended to be held in the first quarter of the designated year, the World Design Street Festival can also be paired with another WDC Signature Event or event on the local WDC calendar.

World Design Spotlight

The World Design Spotlight is a celebratory event conceptualized to highlight design as an impactful tool for city development and to showcase why the WDC Host City was awarded the designation. Speaking to the designated city's unique identity, this event pays tribute to the city's design community, recognizing those local contributions that led to the city's WDC designation. It also recognizes best practices in impact design at the international level.

World Design Experience

The World Design Experience is an interactive showcase of design from around the world held over seven days. With an emphasis on user experience, this WDC Signature Event features exhibitors sharing their unique design stories as interpreted through the theme of the WDC year. Design effective communities are invited to present the best of their country's design and its power to improve quality of life, creating an opportunity for designers to share ideas, innovation and expertise. This WDC Signature Event can raise significant media attention and is a prime draw for international visitors.

World Design Policy Conference

Design-led urban policies are increasingly recognized as critical to shaping the future prosperity and wellbeing of a city and its inhabitants. The World Design Policy Conference provides a global platform for the exchange of ideas, insights, and best practices from different countries, regions, and cities that are developing, launching, and maintaining effective design policy. The most content rich of the WDC Signature Events, its findings have the potential to set the foundation for a design-led legacy programme that benefits the design community and citizens and that resonates far beyond the designated WDC year.

World Design Network of Cities Meeting

The World Design Network of Cities Meeting is a forum for municipal representatives, including but not limited to the mayors of WDC designated cities. Led by WDO, this Signature Event provides an opportunity for this unique cluster of cities to maintain an active dialogue about design in the life of a city since the WDC designated year. The meeting aims to highlight successes in WDC legacy programmes and to identify collaborative opportunities between the WDC designated and other design effective cities.

World Design Capital Convocation Ceremony

The WDC Convocation Ceremony is a symbolic event to mark the successes of the WDC year, showcase the year's highlights, recognize those who contributed to the year's success, share the preliminary findings of the impact study, reflect on the WDC legacy, and officially hand over the WDC title to the incoming city. The Convocation Ceremony includes city officials, local WDC leadership, the design community, media and the incoming WDC's political leadership and planning team.

WDC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The WDC Organizational Structure is split into two levels:

1. The WDC Programme: high-level management, promotion and support of the overall WDC programme by WDO
2. WDC Project Management: local development and implementation of the designated calendar year of events by an independent management entity named by the host city.

The WDC Programme

As creator and owner of World Design Capital, WDO manages each cycle of the WDC Programme from its international Secretariat based in Montreal (Canada). WDO is responsible for the vision, policy, and promotion of the WDC programme. Daily operations relating to each of the designated WDC cities are managed by a professional team from within the Secretariat, including the bid process, contract management, international sponsorships and partnerships, programming and WDC Signature Event support, as well as brand management.

WDC Project Management

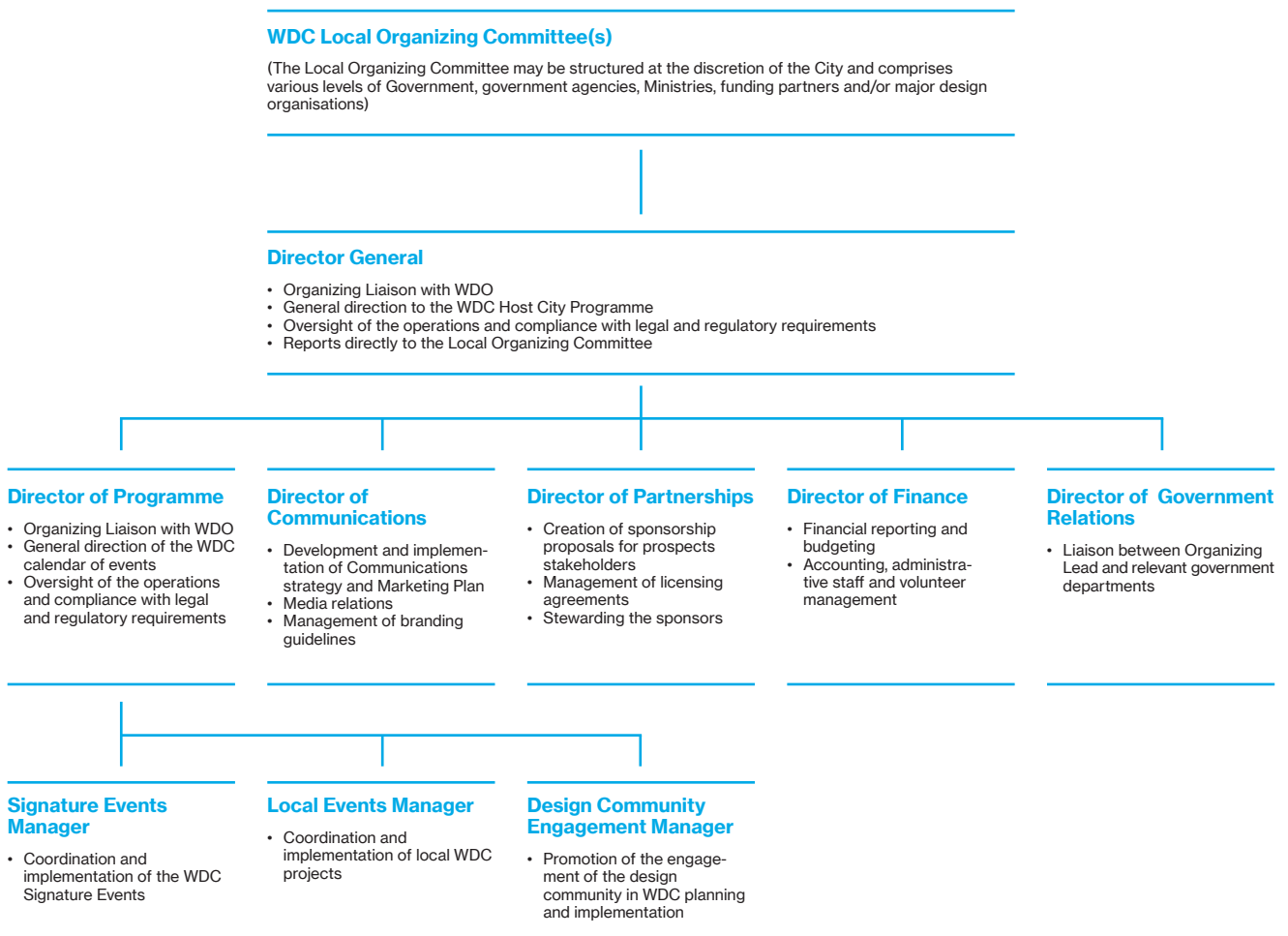
The designated city establishes an independent managing entity, the WDC Organizing Lead, responsible for the planning and execution of the proposed WDC calendar year of events for the designated city. The members of the Organizing Lead execute local and international promotion for the programming and the city itself.

A WDC Local Organizing Committee is established by the city to provide strategic direction to the Organizing Lead for the WDC year-long programming. It is composed of city representatives, other levels of government, as well as external stakeholders (i.e. funding partners) and representatives from the local design community. The Organizing Lead members liaise with their Local Organizing Committee and WDO.

In addition, WDO and the designated city establish an International Advisory Committee (IAC) whose chief responsibility is to help place the WDC Host City in a global context and attract different regions to what is happening in the designated city. Composed of high-profile local and international design leaders and a representative from the Secretariat, they provide creative direction and serve as a sounding board for programme ideas.

To date, the composition of the Organizing Leads within each of the WDC designated cities have been different from one another, each built around the intricacies of their own municipal requirements and the logistics of establishing a stand-alone entity to use funding dedicated from the city and implement it. However, at the very core, there is a comprehensive, yet simple structure and workflow to support collaboration with WDO, and the implementation of the calendar of events, and meet the strategic objectives set out by the city in its bid.

PROPOSED STRUCTURE FOR ORGANIZING LEAD



The relationship between WDO and the host city's independent entity, the Organizing Lead, is a fundamental part of the programme's success. Both teams collaborate regularly through conference calls and in-person meetings, developing proposals, reports and other published materials to ensure effective management and implementation of the year's calendar of events.



THE WDC DESIGNATION
OPENED UP REMARKABLE
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
OUR CITY AND WE FEEL
DEEPLY HONOURED
TO (HAVE) JOINED THIS
DISTINGUISHED GROUP OF
WORLD DESIGN CAPITALS.

HOW TO APPLY

- **The title of World Design Capital is open to any city in the world that can demonstrate its commitment to design as a powerful tool to strengthen economic, social, cultural, and environmental development. It is given to those cities that have most effectively and creatively used design as a tool for progress.**
- **Cities must clearly demonstrate how their government, industry, educational institutions, designers, and population are working individually and in concert to revitalize and reinvent their urban environment.**

- **Only one application is accepted per city and must clearly demonstrate support from local government.**
- **Previous applicants are welcome to reapply.**

WHO CAN SUBMIT A BID?

World Design Capital is open to any city, large or small.

However, activating the WDC project citywide does require a certain critical mass and resources such as substantial cultural and business infrastructure, a well-developed design industry or design programmes, sufficient administrative services, a successful portfolio of large-scale design initiatives and the capability to manage the international promotion, as well as a relevant budget to support the year-long programme.

The bid must be formally submitted by an autonomous agency, and may not be from within a level of government of the bidding city. However, the support of the local government is essential and the mayor of the Host City has a key role to play during the designated year. A letter of financial guarantee from the city must be included in the bid.

The bid should be prepared by a relevant and dedicated team that can preferably see the bid process all the way through from submission until the final designation. While the bid does not have to come from a design organization or designer, the designation is based on the fact that the city is using design and designers to better their infrastructure, systems, and general quality of life. Successful World Design Capital cities, and design cities generally have strong, inclusive partnerships with national, regional and local stakeholders in the areas of culture, design, business and municipal development.

How to develop your bid

It all starts with a conversation between the city and design stakeholders. Engaging the design community that activates local programmes or projects, hosting a town hall meeting to gauge interest and to see what the success might be like if your city is designated World Design Capital, and meeting with the mayor or city officials are all ways of starting a bid. The World Design Capital programme really is one of full community engagement. It is an initiative, which brings together all types of industries and people of all ages, to communicate with each other and recognize the role that design plays in their city and in their lives.

In putting together a creative bid package, we recommend that bidding entities engage all relevant partners (local and national) to showcase the right balance between the support of the political authorities, as well as the support of the local design and business community.

The bid comprises many components, each of which needs care and consideration. All questions listed on the application must be answered comprehensively. The bid can be as long or as short as is deemed necessary by the team preparing the submission.

Bidding teams and organizations are welcome to be as creative as they want using a variety of mediums to get their message across. Bearing in mind that the bid books are the first indication of the city's appreciation of design, it is strongly recommended that each bid express a unique and palpable aesthetic – one that would reflect a relatable expression of design in the city. The style and format of the bid package must not compromise the quality and access to information on how a city will embrace the WDC designation.

Cities are also requested to submit a brief video to present the proposed theme for the WDC year, as well as to highlight the places and spaces that are important to the city's design heritage.

Determining a budget

As part of the bid, cities are required to submit a budget outlining projected operating and programming costs, as well as an overview of the financial support that will be given to the project by various levels of government.

Once designated, WDO and the designated city will work in concert to understand the WDC Host City Agreement (HCA) requirements and secure the right mix of partnership and/or sponsorship support to fulfill the year-long programme.



THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT
WORLD DESIGN CAPITAL
PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN
RAISING THE PROFILE
OF CAPE TOWN ON THE
WORLD STAGE.

WHAT ARE THE FEES RELATED TO THE WDC DESIGNATION?

Application Fee

A 10 000 Euro non-refundable application fee must be remitted at the time of submission.

Administration Fee

As a condition for consideration for the final selection, shortlisted cities shall remit a 30 000 Euro fee to cover administrative and logistical expenses during the evaluation phase. This fee includes travel fees but excludes accommodations for WDO representatives.

Management Fee

Designated World Design Capital cities shall remit a 630 000 Euro Management hosting fee to be paid over three (3) years in three (3) equal installments. Specific details regarding the timing of the fee payments will be presented in the WDC Host City Agreement. This fee includes travel fees but excludes accommodations for WDO representatives.

Invoicing

Upon request, we will issue an invoice to facilitate fee processing, at which time banking details will also be provided for fee transfer.

BECOMING A WDC — TIMELINE

- **November 2022**

Launch of the WDC 2026 Bid Process

- **March 2023**

Deadline for Submission of Bids

- **June 2023**

Bid Evaluation and Shortlisting by WDC Selection Committee

- **July 2023**

City Visits by WDO representatives

- **September 2023**

Final Evaluation by the WDC Selection Committee

- **October 2023**

Announcement at the 33rd World Design Assembly in Tokyo (Japan)

- **Q1 2024**

Signing Ceremony

- **2024-2026**

Programme planning, and observation and attendance
at WDC 2026 Signature Events

- **2026**

Implementation of the year-long programme of events

*Dates subject to change

FOR OUR CITY, BEING WORLD DESIGN CAPITAL IN 2022 IS A REAL CHALLENGE AND A GREAT OPPORTUNITY. THIS RECOGNITION GIVES A BOOST TO THE VALENCIAN AND SPANISH CREATIVE INDUSTRY, PROGRESS IS MADE IN COMPETITIVENESS, OUR WHOLE ECONOMY AND OUR PRODUCTS ARE PROJECTED THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE WORLD. FURTHERMORE, NEW FORMULAS ARE GIVEN VISIBILITY TO IMPROVE PEOPLE'S LIVES, ALSO THROUGH DESIGN.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How many cities are shortlisted to move on to the final selection process?

A maximum of three cities can be shortlisted. This decision is made based on the relevance and calibre of the bids received as they relate to the selection criteria. The Selection Committee first identifies the applicant cities that meet the selection criteria and, based on the information submitted, have demonstrated how they plan to mobilize their community and financial support to realistically deliver a successful programme during the designated WDC year.

Who attends the city visits?

Representatives from WDO conduct the visits to the shortlisted cities.

Can the WDC logo be used in the application process?

The WDC logo cannot be used by any bidding city in their application or on any other related documentation or promotion. The logo and all of its usage guidelines are provided to the city once the final selection has been made.

Can we include other tourism information and supplementary documents from our partners with our bid document?

To ensure that all applications are evaluated equally, only the material as it relates to the application questions will be submitted to the Selection Committee for review.

Can two cities from the same country apply?

Two cities from the same country may apply for the designation in the same cycle. However, some countries have regulations that prevent two cities from competing with each other for the same designation. Check guidelines for bidding in your own country before submitting an application.

**What is the role of the Organizing Lead and its Organizing Liaison?
Should they already be appointed at the application stage?**

The Organizing Lead is the independent management team in the designated city responsible for the WDC year's planning, implementation and promotion. The Organizing Liaison is the head of the Organizing Lead. It is mandatory that an Organizing Liaison be identified within 30 days of being named WDC 2026.

What does WDO do to help the designated city?

A professional team from WDO works closely with the designated city as soon as the city is designated WDC. They share the methodology for all the signature events, introduce the city to past world design capitals, and handle contract management, international sponsorships and partnerships, overall WDC programming, promotion and brand management.

What is the HCA?

The WDC Host City Agreement (HCA) is an agreement between WDO and the government of the selected city, which governs the management of the WDC project from signing through completion.

What should we include in the city bid video?

A short promotional video is requested to support each city's bid. The video may include footage of important design landmarks, as well as information relating to the theme of the bid. The video should be no more than 2:30 minutes in length.



頂埔
Dingpu

台北車站
Taipei Main Station



國父紀念館
SUN YAT-SEN MEMORIAL HALL

設在臺
計三北

Asiatron City



USING WDC 2016
AS A PLATFORM, THE CITY
GOVERNMENT IS NOW
ACTIVELY INCORPORATING
INTO CITY ADMINISTRATIVE
SYSTEM THE ABUNDANT
INNOVATIVE SKILLS OF LOCAL
DESIGN PROFESSIONALS
AND CREATIVITY FROM THE
PEOPLE OF TAIPEI.





ABOUT US

Founded in 1957, World Design Organization (WDO)[®], formerly known as the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (Icsid), is an international non-governmental organization that promotes the profession of industrial design. We advocate industrial design driven innovation that creates a better world, engaging our more than 185 member organizations in collaborative efforts and international programming – World Design Capital[®], World Design Talks, World Design Impact Prize, World Industrial Design Day, and Interdesign. We have United Nations Special Consultative Status. Visit www.wdo.org.

