

# Dublin World Design Capital 2014

Pivot Dublin - Becoming a World Design Capital

August 2010

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# Overview

## Introduction

Dublin is preparing to bid for World Design Capital status in 2014. This document provides an introduction to the World Design Capital (WDC) designation and outlines the proposed strategy for Dublin's bid for WDC status in 2014. It details how this strategy will be implemented and why it is an appropriate and effective approach for Dublin's bid.

This designation is biennial and is awarded on foot of a competition held by The International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID). The inaugural WDC was Turin in 2008, Seoul is this year's capital and Helsinki will be WDC in 2012. The winning city hosts a programme of events over the course of the year. It is clear that the award is not a 'status' designator but a recognition of innovative cities that have most effectively and creatively used design as a tool for social, cultural and economic progress.

Preliminary work on Dublin's bid was initiated by Dublin City Council in October 2009 and is a collaboration between the four Dublin Local Authorities. The project is set out in four stages.

- Stage 1 Feasibility study
- Stage 2 Develop bid theme and strategy
- Stage 3 Formulate bid content
- Stage 4 Produce bid document

## Feasibility Stage

While Dublin's local authorities would submit a bid, it is clear that the work on the actual content of the bid would have to come from the city's designers themselves. The feasibility stage included consultation with the various elements of the city's design professions to gauge the level of interest and commitment, which could be relied upon for a successful bid<sup>1</sup>. The Stage 1 Feasibility report; ['Dublin World Design Capital 2014 - The potential for Dublin to mount a bid for designation'](#)<sup>2</sup> concluded that making a bid for this designation would have significant benefits for Dublin – not only through winning the designation but through the work which would need to be done in order to make a credible bid.

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<sup>1</sup> The feasibility report contains letters of support from Design Business Ireland, Engineer's Ireland, Institute of Creative Advertisers and Design (ICAD), Institute of Designers of Ireland (IDI), Interiors Association, Irish Landscape Institute, Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) and the Urban Forum.

<sup>2</sup> ; The Stage 1 Feasibility report is available on the Dublin City Council website; <http://www.dublincity.ie/Housing/CityArchitectsDivision/Pages/DesignInDublin.aspx>

The paper sets out the rationale for undertaking this project as follows.

*There is general recognition that while it would be a significant achievement for Dublin to win this competition, the overwhelming value will be found in the process of making a bid.*

- *The World Design Capital project offers a common ground on which to further develop an integrated and united Irish Design Community.*
- *A well-executed interdisciplinary bid could result in a clear and compelling statement about Irish design capacity.*
- *It would set out a plan of action for design initiatives and articulate the role Irish designers can play in meeting fundamental challenges now faced by Irish society.*

*This work in itself would be valuable in promoting innovation in the city.*

This is in line with national and international policy. Design is the bridge between creativity and innovation, however there is a significant deficit in Irish society in understanding the role of good design in developing innovation, economic growth and ensuring value for money. The Forfas report 'Skills in Creativity Design and Innovation' (November 2009) states '*creativity and design are the key drivers of innovation, which is in turn a key driver of productivity growth*'. This reiterates a consensus at European level that design skills and design industries are fundamental to achieving a vibrant society and economy. Much has been spoken and written also about the need to develop Ireland as a Smart Economy and the key role the creative industries can play in achieving this. This potential is there to be tapped. This is the essence of the Smart Economy, which leverages all available assets to the greatest possible extent.<sup>3</sup> For World Design Capital to contribute to the development of Ireland as a Smart Economy would be a success in its own right.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal 2009-2014' December 2008

# Defining the direction

## Consultation and Communication

A number of means of consultation have been pursued in order to both promote the bid and to discover a credible theme, including; dedicated Facebook and LinkedIn groups<sup>4</sup>, workshops, one to one meetings and questionnaires on attitudes to design<sup>5</sup>.

Workshops were held across the city; 'Darc Space' in North Great Georges Street on the 3rd June, DIT Mountjoy Square as part of a design challenge celebrating the World Industrial Design Day on the 29th June, and South Dublin, Fingal and DunLaoghaire Rathdown Civic Offices on the 5th, 7th and 8th July respectively. The workshops focussed on themes; '*Design addresses the need*', '*Humane solutions for a resilient world*', '*Design process*', '*Design for everyone by everyone*' and '*Making a city for our future selves*'. The distinctive quality of design cities was emphasised, namely that the people living there understand the difference between good and bad design and expect design that enriches and inspires their lives.

## Theme

Feasibility stage discussions offered characteristics of a successful bid against which potential bid themes and programme strategies could be measured. These characteristics have informed the stage 2 process.

### *The bid should:*

- *Contain proposals which are genuinely reflective of the life and needs of Dublin and which avoid following inappropriate international models.*
- *Be honest about the state of design in Dublin, but should pick out an alternative narrative of its design life, seeking and revealing hidden strengths or potentials.*
- *Propose a strategy for improving awareness, promotion and integration of design in everyday activity with a view to aiding social, economic and cultural development.*
- *Propose innovative solutions to recognised problems.*
- *Have relevance for broader international issues of design and innovation.*

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<sup>4</sup> Titled 'Dublin Design Capital Community'. Additional 'LinkedIn' groups have been set up by interested parties.

<sup>5</sup> In order to develop communications with the wider population of the city, the Designing Dublin team were commissioned to develop a communications strategy for the project. The initial stage of this was to conduct a survey about attitudes to design among those not directly involved in the sector. This was piloted as an online survey circulated to Dublin City Council's staff (an online audience of approximately 3,500 people) before being finalised for communication with the wider population. 241 staff responded and these returns are being analysed.

In submitting a bid, Dublin will compete with at least 50 other cities worldwide<sup>6</sup>. Some of these cities are globally recognised as centres for world-class design. Many will be in a position to generate strong bids that highlight a rich design culture and a comprehensive design infrastructure. Dublin is neither recognised as a centre for world-class design nor can it claim to be. However, it has the ambition, imagination and resources to become one. To achieve this requires the adoption of a bid strategy that is unique yet authentic to Dublin. It must also be pragmatic. This means accepting that we have much to learn but also realising that we have much to give.

The process of design can be seen as the exchange and development of ideas. This requires communication, networking and negotiation. These are our strengths. They have manifested themselves in a global network of connections and relationships that give both Ireland and Dublin strength and influence beyond their size. These are our resources. So if Dublin is already a Social Capital surely we can use these links to become a Design Capital.

**This ambition underpins the bid theme, 'Pivot Dublin - Becoming a World Design capital'.**

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<sup>6</sup> An ICSID press release from November 2009 states that a total of 46 cities from 27 countries applied for the designation of WDC 2012. Bilbao, Cape Town and Beijing have all declared they are applying for WDC designation in 2014.

# **Bid strategy**

## **Pivot Dublin**

Dublin has a recognised network of international relationships exhibited by an unusually large emigrant community. This network provides us with access to a rich variety of knowledge and experience. It directly links us to a vast array of innovative projects that are engaging design as a tool for social, cultural and economic development. It also links resources we possess to places of need. We have the networks to learn and the networks to give.

The bid strategy envisages Dublin as a pivot point through which there is a continual flow and exchange of knowledge, skills and resources. It sees us leverage the networks and connections of the Irish Diaspora to guide the development of innovative, appropriate and effective solutions that help address needs. It also sees us in turn distribute newly developed skills and solutions to places of need, again through our networks. We become a World Capital of Design through collection of ideas and dispersion of solutions.

## **Project Implementation**

The implementation of this strategy links directly to a design process that is at the core of all design disciplines. As part of this process designers seek to discover and define the needs and opportunities related to a project. This leads to a defined brief that then feeds into the development and delivery of solutions.

The Dublin WDC bid strategy recognises that we don't yet have the solutions but that we can apply this design process to generate them. In this context, the events linked to Dublin WDC 2014 act as the design process whilst Dublin city becomes the central focus point.

This strategy is currently being developed with ongoing examination of the practicalities and feasibility of issues involved in developing design projects which would take place in Dublin and addressing local needs, balanced with corresponding projects to be developed in Dublin for implementation in other locations, addressing relevant needs.

## **Conclusion**

This strategy provides an innovative yet achievable approach to the bid. It recognises and builds on some of our inherent strengths such as communication and networking. It is pragmatic about our current position in the world of design but optimistic about our future. It is unique to Dublin but it also reaches out to the world. Through this strategy we can not only become a World Design Capital but also lead a long-term initiative that addresses the most pressing human and environmental needs at home and abroad.



# Making the bid

## Application process

The 2014 competition will be launched late in 2010, likely in November based on previous years, with a submission date likely to be required in March 2011. The submission fee will be €5000 a further fee of €15,000 is due if short-listed. The organising committee will visit the short listed cities and announce the winner in late 2011, giving the successful city two years to develop their World Design Capital year programme.

The content of the bid is prescribed and should follow the template developed by Turin for 2008. Factual information is required concerning access to and around the city, hotel accommodation, listings of cultural venues, design institutions and descriptions of local design industry. The bid must outline the overarching theme and programme strategy for the bid year and identify how this programme will be funded. As stated above, we have devised a bid strategy; the challenge will be to substantiate the claim that we can deliver that strategy through demonstrable projects, illustrations and stories.

## Programme

The following sets out targets for the 2014 bid production process.

- **30th August 2010** Initiate tender process for bid production team (open tender)
- **Public launch of bid following formal endorsement by City and County Councils September 2010**
- **11th October 2010** Tender return date
- **12th October 2010** Assess tenders
- **Competition launch October / November 2010.** *Date to be confirmed by ICSID*
- **1st November 2010** Appoint bid production team
- **10th January 2011** Complete final draft bid content
- **31st January 2011** Advisory Team and Steering Group sign off of bid content
- **Competition bid submission March 2011.** *Date to be confirmed by ICSID*

## Bid launch

It is proposed to launch the bid publicly following formal endorsement by Dublin City and County Councils in September. A holding web page for the bid is currently being prepared by in time for the launch. This will establish an interim web presence until a communications and graphic strategy for the overall bid is produced, via the later public procurement. This will be relatively simple site, designed to facilitate publicising the bid, inviting and receiving submissions from the public and providing a space for posting news about development of the bid and events of design interest.

## Bid implementation structures

This structure is as set out at feasibility stage and identifies two strands in the bid development process; Bid Content, including design and production of bid documents and Bid Enabling, including securing funding and promotion of bid. This process is being project managed by the Lead Co-Ordination Group comprising a team from the City and County Architects.



The Steering Committee, which will constitute the bidding entity, consists presently of the Dublin City and County Managers and will be augmented with Partners instrumental to delivering the bid programme e.g. representatives from Business, Design Organisations and Institutions and International Aid Agencies.

A formal Advisory Panel of people from across a range of disciplines is being established. The Advisory Panel role is to vet the quality of the bid and the composition will be published on completion.

## **Bid content**

Dublin becoming a World Capital of Design is a chance to spark our ambition and unleash our potential. Ideally, design will be positioned in a surprising context. It will be about small projects that people are involved in or stumble on or massive events involving many people. In order to collate and research all the elements of design that are happening in the city, we are reaching out through the website inviting designers to submit their ideas, stories and projects. The website will be a market place for the sharing and development of knowledge, ideas and experience. It will be a collaborative effort to create and implement solutions to the city's most pressing needs. It will be for everyone, a pivot point for Dublin and Design.

Creativity and a high graphic standard are essential and will require the engagement of a design research, writing, graphic and video production team. A procurement process is being initiated, which will seek tenders from such consortia or companies. The successful team will have knowledge and understanding of Irish Design across all disciplines, a unique and authentic graphic approach, and the creative capacity to develop the potential of the bid strategy into a credible bid.

The Helsinki and Eindhoven bids for the 2012 designation are available and these have been studied.

Eindhoven, 2012 runner up, had as its theme '**The city of Eindhoven – Creating a Caring Society**'. The bid highlights a rich design culture and a comprehensive design infrastructure. It demonstrates how Dutch design is globally recognised and how Eindhoven is a seedbed of Dutch design. The bid introduces an extensive set of existing projects that will start in 2009 and culminate in 2012 where results will be presented and discussed. The large bid budget reflects this. The spirit of the bid is strong, industrial, confident and promotional. It seeks to link all aspects of industry but there is minimal development of a link to the general public.

The theme of Helsinki's winning bid is '**Open Helsinki – Embedding Design in Life**'. It is 'an open invitation' to both its citizens and the world, to exchange ideas, products and services. 'Embedded design' is identified as the means to achieve this. This idea sees design in a role where it connects different disciplines, engages the user at an early stage in the process, is co-creative and strengthens the role of design in the planning and development processes. The WDC programme year starts from the point of nomination and continues years after the event and is neither a launch pad nor a finish line. The spirit of the bid is personal, friendly and open and throughout the bid the terms, '*participation*', '*a co-creative design process*', '*early dialogue*', and '*everyone*.' feature prominently. At the core of the bid an emphasis that design is at the heart of Finnish culture and that it is embedded in Finnish DNA.

Helsinki's winning bid is notably brief in setting out its theme, programme and budget. However, considerable detail is given on Helsinki design life and histories, for example, profiles are given of past and present influential Finnish architects.

## **Bid enabling - Funding and Promotion**

Funding is required both for the completion of the bid document and also for commitments for funding the bid year programme. The Helsinki 2012 programme budget of €15 million is drawn from Municipal Authorities (6m), Government (5m) and other sources (4m). The bid enabling team must develop a business plan, which identifies the economic, social and cultural benefits to the City in hosting such a significant design festival.

Costs associated with the bid production include: Development of bid strategy and production of holding website; production and design of bid content; printing costs; Competition entry fee and ICSID membership. Final costs will not be known until after the bid production tenders are returned. The DEHLG has responded positively to an application for direct grant aid under the delivery programme for the the Government Policy on Architecture 2009 - 2015<sup>7</sup>.

The bid is relevant to the work of a number of Government Departments and support is being sought on a cross party and department basis. The project team has met Ciaran Cuffe, Minister of State with special responsibility for Sustainable Transport, Horticulture, Planning and Heritage who has indicated his support publicly. Also supportive is Ruari Quinn TD. Both elected representatives have a valuable insight given their formal architectural design qualifications. A meeting has been arranged with Mary Hanafin Minister for Tourism Culture and Sport for early September and contact has been made also with the Department of Enterprise Trade and Innovation.<sup>8</sup>

It is crucial that we ensure that the competition promoters, ICSID, are aware of our interest in this bid and the value we place on the designation and of course, design. A number of steps have been taken in this regard.

- An application is being made for membership of ICSID.
- The Convention Centre plans to bid for the IDA Congress<sup>9</sup> in 2015 and has invited representatives from the composite organisations for the opening of the Centre this year. This will present an excellent opportunity to promote Dublin's design capacity in an informal way.
- We will be participating in an ICSID project on developing city design indicators. Dublin held an event to celebrate World Industrial Design Day on the 28th June and this event was reported on ICSID's website.

Consideration must be given to attending world design capital events in Seoul or Helsinki or to visiting ICSID's HQ in Montreal. This could be arranged through our embassy network.

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<sup>7</sup> The Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015 seeks to promote awareness and understanding of the contribution of good design to civic life. The policy contains 15 objectives supported by 45 actions under six categories - 'research', 'leading by example', 'architecture and the wider environment', 'developing the demand for quality' and 'implementation and review'.

<sup>8</sup> The bid was identified as an objective in the Report on the Lord Mayor's Commission on Employment and European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, publicly announced her support at the Lord Mayor's Commission on employment conference, held in Croke Park on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

<sup>9</sup> The IDA, the International Design Alliance, is an umbrella organisation comprising ICSID, ICOGRADA and the IFI.

