

Madrid City Brand Project

Briefing on the Design Contest for the Creation of a New Visual Identity for the City of Madrid



I. Why Does Madrid Need a Visual Identity?

The government of the city of Madrid is fostering the development of a city brand narrative to promote Madrid abroad and to strengthen its position among the world's major cities with the aim of attracting talent, tourism and investment, creating more wealth and employment and increasing citizens' pride in being part of the city.

Against the current global backdrop, providing Madrid with its own visual identity to help promote the city around the world and contribute to its economic recovery is one of the key strategic actions outlined in the City of Madrid Operational Governance Plan, as part of the policy commitments made in the 2019 - 2023 Government Agreement between Partido Popular and Ciudadanos - Partido para la Ciudadanía, signed on 14 June 2019, and the Covid-19 City Agreements, approved by plenary on 7 July 2020.

Developing and promoting the Madrid City Brand is a challenge and an opportunity to define its identity, turn its differential attributes into a competitive advantage over other cities around the world, strengthen its image and better communicate its attractions.

Madrid doesn't have a graphic icon

For years our city has been accused of lacking a symbolic identity, an icon to make Madrid recognisable across the globe. Residents and visitors alike find it hard to identify the city's key tangible and intangible attributes.

The city of Madrid has no graphic icon, logo or brand claim that's easily recognised by its citizens or the international community. One of the project's main challenges is to determine these values, which already exist in the city and its residents, and to make them part of its brand identity.

Although most of Madrid's residents (90.3%) believe it has its own identity and that this identity is known abroad (67.3%), it isn't easy to point to a specific symbol, whether tangible or intangible, that clearly identifies our city¹.

The perception study conducted among residents of the city of Madrid highlighted the need for it to develop its personality:

- A large share of those surveyed were unable to point to specific values and attributes that identify Madrid, as they believed multiple adjectives could be used to describe the city.

- Madrid lacks a defined city brand narrative that has been widely disseminated at the national and international levels.
- It lacks a distinctive icon to represent the city and make it recognisable around the world.

What do the experts think?

"To achieve this sort of top-of-mind recognition, all stakeholders have to be rowing in the same direction, with the aim of driving and consolidating a 'Madrid City Brand' with its own identity and spirit".

"In the complex world of perceptions and other intangible factors, when being rolled out this approach –although new and different– runs the risk of being perceived by some stakeholders and observers as something vague and indistinct which, by emphasising values over images, prevents identification of a specific symbol or icon that the rest of the world can associate with the city when they think of it".

"Further work should be done with respect to material, tangible reference points that embody the concepts proposed in this plan, ultimately focusing on faces and places that convey the reality of Madrid that we want to portray, giving the city concrete, iconic points of reference".

"Madrid can't be captured by a single image, because it has so many. The idea isn't to repudiate its own iconography or turn to an abstract notion that marginalises it, but rather to seek a genuine point of reference that reflects who we are, as all true icons do".

"The narrative should also include a very brief encapsulation (this could be a phrase, an image, an icon, etc.) that all of us, not just those responsible for disseminating it but all of Madrid's people and organisations, will be on board with and identify with, willingly acting as "ambassadors" for the city.

"For this project to succeed, however, this intangible icon must be supported, embraced and promoted by Madrid's society as a whole, especially the tourism sector".

Why is it being created?

The aim is for the new Madrid mark to provide the city with an **icon that's easily recognisable abroad**; with its own differentiated identity that strengthens emotional ties to the city among visitors and residents alike, enabling Madrid to achieve recognition as one of the best cities in the world to live in and enjoy.

Madrid's new mark is being created to promote tourism, to position Madrid as a preferred destination for investment and talent and to attract events and/or sector-specific conferences to the city.

The idea is for it to have an international, national and local reach, in that order and over a prolonged period of time.

II. Who We Are: Contracting Authority

The General Coordination Unit for Economy, Trade, Consumer Affairs and Partnership, which is attached to Madrid City Council's Department of Economy, Innovation and Employment, coordinates and runs the Madrid City Brand and Partnership Office, created in 2019 to foster economic promotion of the city and to promote the Madrid City Brand at the international level, in collaboration with the City Council's other government departments.

Working alongside these departments as well as public and private stakeholders, the Madrid City Brand and Partnership Office fosters development and activation of the Madrid City Brand. To this end, it carries out actions aimed at disseminating and promoting the brand, develops programmes to find and create loyalty among strategic partners, and analyses the brand's impact on key external opinion leaders.

III. Creation of a Mark for the City of Madrid

The mark isn't for Madrid City Council but rather for the city of Madrid; a mark that conveys its attributes, values and identity to those outside the city faithfully, avoiding fabrications or focusing on passing fads.

The Madrid mark **is not the institutional mark of Madrid City Council** and it should not be used in processes or dealings carried out by Madrid City Council in the course of its administrative activity (e.g., administrative procedures, tax office communications, notifications regarding administrative files, fines, healthcare, etc.).

This mark DOES NOT replace Madrid's institutional mark in any of the areas it is used: Madrid City Council,

Regional Government of Madrid, Government Delegation in Madrid. It exists alongside it, and any interference must be avoided.

It should be conceived of as a **mark to promote the city in the international arena, but also at the national level and inside the city itself.**

It should be able to be used and "adopted" by all stakeholders that are involved in the city or wish to display Madrid's visual identity alongside their own logos, and at all events, forums or meetings **where Madrid is mentioned.**

In this regard, one of the objectives of the Madrid mark is for Madrid's residents, companies, associations and any stakeholder that wants to support the city to remix Madrid's visual identity into their own.

Trends

Be Digital

The mark must be contemporary and digital. We do absolutely everything using our phones today, particularly our mobiles. The mark's readiness for digital media could be a key factor in positioning the Madrid brand.

Transparency

Smart interactions with citizens and making information accessible to all is a global trend.

The people at the heart of it all

The internet caused a paradigm shift that has empowered users, who have become more demanding with respect to how they consume.

Large corporations and the way they relate to their customers have created a new way of interacting, to which we have very quickly become accustomed. In this regard, governments also need to adapt to the new, more demanding attitude towards relations.

Who is the mark targeted at?

Place brands differ from commercial brands, as the agents who help activate them are also sometimes among the brand's users and target audiences.

This mark is aimed at **international, national and local** users. However, the users in each particular category may vary at the time of its activation, depending on whether they are defined based on nationality or the geographic area where they are located.

The mark is aimed at citizens and both the public and private sectors in Madrid, in Spain and abroad. In the local sphere, it is aimed at those who live or reside in Madrid (whether Spaniards or foreigners, for work, study, business, etc.) as well as visitors to the city (potential or actual business visitors and tourists).

The following target groups are given by way of example:

In the City Council:

- Madrid City Council institutional mark: *very frequent co-usage*
- Marks of local authority enterprises or joint enterprises (EMT transport service, etc.): *very frequent co-usage*

Outside the City Council:

- Citizens
- Visitors to the city for business or leisure, and potential visitors
- Marks of governments and public institutions, embassies and international organisations
- Marks of other cities and/or countries
- Schools, chambers, associations and foundations
- Companies: SMEs, entrepreneurs, large enterprises and business clusters (science, technology, fashion, etc.), and tourism industry companies: medical congress and other congress associations, conference and event organisers, travel agencies, tour operators and airlines
- Universities and business schools
- People or organisations from strategic sectors of the city within the mark's sphere of activity
- Journalists, influencers, rankings, etc.

Scope of the mark: international, national and local

At any event or sphere where Madrid is mentioned, with the aim of encouraging brand recognition of the city as a place with a shared yet distinct, differentiated personality: **art, culture, tourism, economy, urban planning, environment, innovation, shopping, gastronomy, etc.**

Citizens should also be able to identify with the new icon for Madrid and help disseminate it on social media, in their daily lives, etc.

The Madrid mark is intended to **have a global reach**, which is why it's vital that it can be used in settings where Spanish and English are spoken in addition to other languages, mainly Italian, French, German, Chinese and Russian

Brand architecture and co-usage with other marks

Various potential brand architecture scenarios exist: branded house, house of brands, polysemous brands, etc., as participants see fit.

Co-usage with different public or private, local, national or international marks

This mark is unconnected to those it will be used with. It must be highly versatile and able to be used alongside those of myriad institutions, organisations and companies from both the public and private sectors.

Explanatory Notes and References:

1

Survey on the Madrid City Brand conducted among residents of Madrid by 010 phone service, from October to December 2017