

Monitoring Report  
2014 - 2018

# Bilbao

UNESCO  
*City of Design*

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## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

For four years Bilbao has been part of the UNESCO creative cities network as a city of design. Becoming part of the select group of cities that make up this network is the result of more than twenty years of effort and work to transform Bilbao. A journey which reached its peak in 2018 when Bilbao was named as the best European city of design by The Urbanism Awards, an honour of which we are extremely proud.

Design has played an essential role in Bilbao's regeneration. Our city has become a modern and innovative city, of significant international standing where design plays a major role as an economic force and in improving the quality of life of the city's inhabitants.

The transformation of the city which has converted Bilbao into a friendly space for both residents and visitors has revolved around the Guggenheim Museum. Urban solutions such as the two promenades along the banks of the river, the bridges crossing it and the metro with its glass entrance canopies. Art and technology are also to be found in spaces such as the Euskalduna Conference Centre and Concert Hall or Azkuna Zentroa, where traces of the past are combined with the most innovative designs.

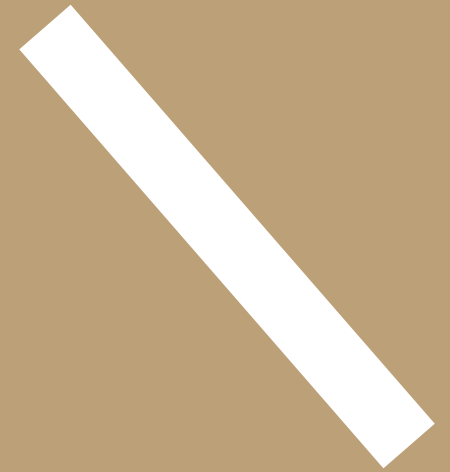


The work of recent decades has had an impact on the creative economy of the city with more than 2500 companies linked to the sector, 7.7% of the total. Figures from the last four years, since Bilbao became part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, reveal an increase of 2.8% in the industry, which currently employs more than 7.000 people.

Looking towards the future, Bilbao will continue developing projects that promote design linked to local industry and provide quality services to meet the needs of the general public and guarantee sustainable urban development.

Juan Mari Aburto  
Mayor of Bilbao

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# **1. Introduction**

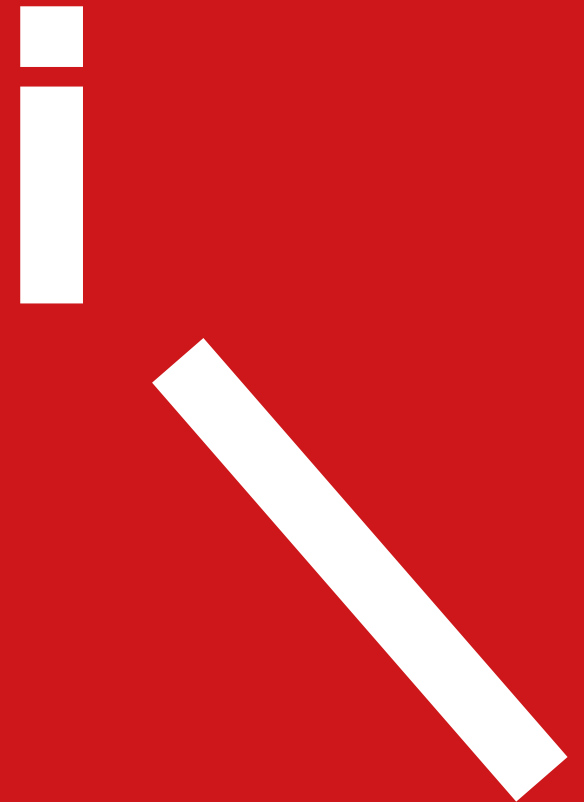
Bilbao, towards the end of the 20th century, had to make radical changes to its economy as a result of industrial restructuring. Re-born from ashes after years of economic uncertainty, it is no longer an industrial city, but a cosmopolitan city where design can be found everywhere.

The strategic plan for rehabilitation and the urban development projects carried out have transformed Bilbao into a global reference for city transformation. Bilbao's amazing transformation has earned the city several prizes and awards. In 2010, it received the [1st Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize](#), also known as the Nobel Prize for innovative cities.

During the regeneration process, urban planners placed design at the heart of their strategies, as they were conscious of its power to make a city more inhabitable and attractive. While the urban regeneration process was getting underway, an economic strategy was introduced to transform Bilbao into a city of services where culture and creativity play a significant role.

Some years after this regeneration process Bilbao can be said to be a hotspot for creative and cultural industries: design, art, film, music, advertising, etc.

The UNESCO designation as a “City of Design” in November 2014 was a recognition of Bilbao's successful people-centred urban transformation and the potential of the city to continue developing in a creative way.



## **2. Executive summary**

In November 2014, Bilbao was designated a UNESCO City of Design. This designation has proved to be a tool for boosting the creative economy in the city and has made the importance of design visible in a number of areas where it had not previously been introduced.

In the last four years Bilbao has been marked by:

- **Creativity** as a key tool for sustainable development.
  - **Improvement of dialogue between the public and the private sector** through work developed by the Bilbao Bizkaia Design Council, a tool to jointly boost creativity and the design sector at both municipal and provincial level.
  - The **appointment of a team focussed on work in the creative sector** within the agencies for Economic Development of Bilbao and Bizkaia: Bilbao Ekintza and BEAZ.
  - **Exchange of experiences at international level:** Bilbao is highly focused on exchanging experiences with other creative cities worldwide. The UNESCO designation has made this more possible as the Creative Cities Network has proved to be an excellent platform for cooperation.
- Since 2014, cooperation and knowledge exchange projects have taken place with other UNESCO Cities of Design: Graz, Saint-Etienne, Helsinki, Torino, Seoul and Montreal and with other cities including Milan, Tallin and Belgrade.
- Organisation of the Bilbao Bizkaia Design Week, as a key tool for making business and the general public more aware about what design has to offer to businesses in terms of innovation.





# 3. General information

**CITY**

Bilbao

**COUNTRY**

Spain

**CREATIVE FIELD**

Design

**DATE OF DESIGNATION**

November 2014

**DATE OF SUBMISSION  
OF THE CURRENT REPORT**

February 2019

**AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLE FOR  
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# 4. Contribution to the network's global management

**b** —

4.1. Number of UCCN annual meetings attended in the last four years

**Kanazawa**  
September 2015

**Enghien-les-Bains**  
June 2017

**Östersund**  
September 2016

**Krakow and Katowice**  
June 2018

## 4.2. Host of a UCCN annual meeting or International conference with UCCN members.

- **World Design Day 2013.** Guest cities: Montreal, Saint Etienne, as members of the COD network and Eindhoven and London.
- **World Design Day 2014.** Guest cities: Liverpool, Brighton, Bristol and Glasgow.
- **Bilbao Bizkaia Design Week 2015.** Guest cities: Helsinki, Turin, Dundee and Saint-Étienne.
- **Bilbao Bizkaia Design Week 2016.** Two member cities of the COD network, Graz and Torino, took part in a conference about Social Design.
- **Bilbao Bizkaia Design Week 2017.** Two cities from the COD network, Saint-Étienne and Graz, took part in several conferences and workshops.
- **On November 2018, 14 professionals from Graz visited Bilbao** and attended several activities included in the programme of the Bilbao Bizkaia Design Week 2018.



**a**

**5. Major initiatives  
implemented at local  
level to achieve the  
objectives of the UCCN**

Since Bilbao has been designated as a UNESCO City of Design, there have been many benefits for the city and new administrative structures have been created in order to ensure that the municipal design initiatives are accomplished.

The social and economic development of the city of Bilbao as a UNESCO City of Design is based on its smart specialisation strategy, focused on specific sectors. As design is one of these strategic sectors, Bilbao Ekintza, a municipal entity that drives the generation of social and economic wealth for the city, established a new department, Strategic Sectors, within its Economic Promotion Area, with a specific line working for design in collaboration with other agents of the region working in the field of design.

In addition, the Bilbao City Council in collaboration with the provincial government, Diputación Foral de Bizkaia, created the “Bilbao Bizkaia Design Council” as a tool for jointly boosting creativity and the design sector at provincial level. This is a public-private collaboration initiative in which the main socio-economic stakeholders together with agents from the area of knowledge are also actively involved. These all have the shared objective of promoting creativity and design as engines for the economic development and international projection of Bilbao and Bizkaia.

## 5.1. Projects, programmes and resources for the promotion of creative industries

### UNESCO Cities of Design (COD) Communication Platform since 2014

Some of the Cities of Design use a joint communication platform with information about design events held in each city and other content that serve to foster exchange within the UNESCO Cities of Design subnetwork.

Bilbao takes part in this initiative, regularly uploading content about creative initiatives in the city.

[www.designcities.net/city/Bilbao](http://www.designcities.net/city/Bilbao)

### Bizkaia Creativa. Provincial Council of Bizkaia (BEAZ)

A programme of economic aids to promote new emerging sectors of economic activity related to the creativity industry in all areas of application. This line of aid is managed by BEAZ, a public organisation of the Provincial Council of Bizkaia, whose objective is to support businesses and entrepreneurs in their efforts to create new projects, innovate and take on an international dimension.

In the period between 2012 and 2017, the Bizkaia Creativa programme supported 141 projects with a grant of 4,350 million Euros; 19% corresponds to the video game sector which has a projected turnover of 58 million Euros, and a projected employment to three years of 486 jobs.



## Economic Aids For CCI Linked Activities And Events In Bilbao. Bilbao City Council (Bilbao Ekintza)

The Bilbao City Council, through its public company, Bilbao Ekintza, has continued promoting measures to boost the attraction, creation and growth of businesses, generating economic activity and employment in Bilbao, giving priority to intervention in the sectors which are strategic to the city including those corresponding to the creative industries. In this way, via the different lines of economic aid, sectoral and professional events and activities for the promotion of activities linked to creativity and design have been subsidised (2,8 million Euros) In particular those that generate opportunities for business, networking and an economic and social return for the city.

## Participation in the CCI Steering Group of the Basque Government

Bilbao Ekintza takes part in the steering group responsible for promoting the deployment of the strategic priorities for achieving the objectives of smart specialisation. This group is formed of agents from public administration, the business network, clusters and scientific and technology agents from the Basque Network for Science and Technology.

## Bilbao Film Commission

Bilbao Bizkaia Film Commission is a public service, promoted by the Bilbao City Council and the Provincial Council of Bizkaia, for the attention, management and attraction of film shoots to the city and the Region. It offers an interpretation and mediation service to film crews, institutions and private stakeholders with the aim of enabling a “warm reception” for audiovisual productions.

## Ensanche Building

The Bilbao City Council offers the space provided by the former Ensanche market for projects from the creative industries which contribute to promoting economic activity in Bilbao and positioning the city as a reference in this sector.

## Basquegame Lab

Basquegame groups together the companies from the Basque video game sector. The intention is to join forces to develop a local video game industry in the Basque Country, demonstrating their application in Industry 4.0.

## Design Corner at Azkuna Zentroa (Az)

Design Corner is a space which is allocated for one year by invitation to businesses and professionals from Bizkaia who design products. The space is located in the Atrium of the Azkuna Zentroa, one of the maximum exponents of cultural and creative expression of the city.

## DigiPen Institute of Technology moves to Zorrotzaurre Island in Bilbao

DigiPen Institute of Technology is an academic community of builders and believers with a shared passion for games, art, and technology who are renowned around the world.

In September 2018, this centre opened its doors on Zorrotzaurre Island, where it is expected that other training and business initiatives will flourish and will attract and promote creative talent.

## 5.2. Events and Activities linked to the creative industries of Bilbao Bizkaia

### Bilbao Bizkaia Design Week (BBDW)

Bilbao Bizkaia Design Week (BBDW) is an event organised by the BiDC (Bilbao Bizkaia Design Council) since 2015 at the initiative of Bilbao City Council and the Provincial Council of Bizkaia for promoting creative industries as a factor of economic development and international projection.

The success of the BiDC is partially based on integrating the private initiative through professional associations and bodies, clusters, creative and digital companies, universities, museums and initiatives linked to the creative industries in the city and regional areas.

The **principal aims** of Bilbao Bizkaia Design Week are:

- To show the general public the work of the creative sectors of the region.
- To make visible the fact that Bilbao belongs to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the Design category.
- To promote the value of design as a factor of competitiveness.
- To organise technical conferences which favour the exchange of experiences and knowledge and generate professional opportunities locally and internationally.
- Organise master-classes, workshops and dynamics that offer spaces for exchanging knowledge, experiences and create project and business opportunities for attendees.
- Organise and support exhibitions aligned with the curatorial line of the BBDW and that promote the work of professionals in the creative sectors.

Number of visitors: 252,700

Number of events: 176

No of partners: 30

# Bilbao Bizkaia Design Week 2015 16 November - 1 December

**Cities & Design Conference.** Design as the transformational focus of cities, where Helsinki was a guest city.

**Industries & Design Conference.** The topics addressed on the day revolved around the field of innovation in materials and processes in the industry.

**Roundtables bringing together representatives from the UCCN** and representatives of the cities invited to the event.

**Forum of BiDC companies** where the most representative projects organised by agents in the sector and a selection of projects from outstanding companies in the Bilbao Bizkaia creative sectors were presented.

**Guest cities:** Helsinki, Turin, Dundee and Saint-Étienne.

**Calls:** Selected Bilbao.

# Bilbao Bizkaia Design Week 2016 17 - 30 November

**Cities & Design Conference.** Social design as a tool for the construction of balanced and sustainable cities.

**Industries & Design Conference.** Design, industrial innovation and the circular economy. With Roerto Verganti from Milan Polytechnic and John Thackara, British designer specialising in innovation and sustainability.

**DZone.** A space open to the public based in Azkuna Zentroa with exhibition space of products designed by local companies from all creative sectors represented in the BiDC and area for organising events and activities within the framework of Design Week.

**Guest cities:** Graz, Turin.

**Calls:** Selected Bilbao



# Bilbao Bizkaia Design Week 2017 16 - 23 November

## Topic: Service Design

**Cities & Design Conference.** The design of services by and for citizens. With Ezio Manzini, professor emeritus of 'Design for Social Innovation' at Elisava and honorary professor of the Polytechnic University of Milan; Itziar Pobes, Service Designer and Project Brain; and Georgina Voss, professor in 'Analytical and Design Studies' at the London College of Communication.

**Industries & Design Conference.** 'Services Economy', with Anna Meroni, associate professor of Design at the Polytechnic University of Milan, and Asier Pérez Director of Research and Creativity at Dowayo Service Design and co-author of the book 'This is Service Design Thinking'.

**Workshops:** 'Design for the Cities', 'Ideiak Pil-pilean', 'Design Services with Anna Meroni', 'Design Services with Asier Pérez'

**'Conversaciones de Tú a tú'**, (Conversations from You to You), a relaxed and entertaining meeting point that brought professionals of the sector together to invite them to share their experiences, concerns, inspiration, etc.

**'Pechakucha Night'**, an international event that began in Tokyo created by the Klein Dytham Architecture Studio. 'Pechakucha Night - Special D Week' served to present eleven initiatives linked to local design and creativity.

**Weekend Creative Family Workshops.**

**Calls:** Selected Bilbao, BiziaGO, Vidrala Awards.

# Bilbao Bizkaia Design Week 2018

Topic: Hyperdesign; expanding the borders of design

**Cities & Design Conference.** In this edition, the future of cities was addressed from the collaborative design and hybridisation of various knowledge disciplines to create solutions that respond to the challenges posed by the development of cities today. With the participation of Izaskun Chinchilla, architect and professor and researcher at the Barlett School of Architecture (UCL London, UK), who currently teaches at the Madrid Polytechnic University School of Architecture; Juan Sádaba, doctor in architecture and Assistant Professor of Urban Design at the Basque Country University and Ling Tan, designer, creator and programmer at the company Umbrellium (London) who provided focus on the challenges of design in today's challenging world.

**Industries & Design Conference.** Aligned with the Hyperdesign concept, this new edition of the conference explored border areas, disciplines and tools for innovation in companies from Spanish and international cases. Roberto Gómez de la Iglesia, economist and cultural manager; Ariane Berthoin Antal, researcher at WZB Berlin and professor at the University of Nantes; Jon Astorquiza, Manager of Elektrart; Sandra Boer, Director of Art Partner; Oscar García, Director of innovation at Obe Hettich.

**Opening Party.** BiDC invited all the people who in one way or another formed part of and made the BBDW18 possible to celebrate the start of the week by attending the opening ceremony of the Hyperdesign exhibition. Expanding the limits of design”.

**‘Hyperdesign, widening the limits of design’ Exhibition;** an exhibition that brings together the work of nine artists and designers whose work transits the border territories between disciplines, languages and technologies.

**‘Design Kalea 1.0’;** a project that proposed a guided tour of the city led by design professionals, which took place throughout Bilbao to show the relationship between design, city and people through different manifestations. The main objective was to bring the concept of design to the public in a close context.

The **Closing Event** featured designer Martín Azúa, who received a mention as ‘Ambassador for the BBDW’. The event also included the award ceremony for the BiziaGO! competition, organised by the Bilbao City Council and the Bizkaia School of Decorators and Interior Designers; the presentation of four case studies from the region’s creative sectors; a look at BBDW18 in pictures and figures; and the musical performance and digital art concert composed by ElektrART for Design Week.

**Exhibitions:** ‘Miradas a los Derechos Humanos’ (A look at Human Rights), ‘Biziago’, ‘La Reconstrucción Abad (The Abad Reconstruction)’, ‘Bajo el Cielo del Kalahari’ (Under the Kalahari Sky), ‘Terminus’, ‘Mass Tourism’

**Weekend creative workshops for families.**

**Calls:** Selected Bilbao, BiziaGO Student!, Vidrala Awards.



Bilbao Design Week. Opening Party.

# Selected Bilbao

## FESTIVAL

Held in the framework of the Bilbao Bizkaia Design Week” since 2012, the aim of this festival is to provide an atmosphere in which participants will be able to discover the latest tendencies in design and visual arts, give their opinion by taking part in debates, go in depth into the relationships between business and design, and to promote the exchange of ideas and creative solutions and responses with other professionals or interested parties from their fields.

## INTERNATIONAL CALL

Every year is launched an International call for professionals and young talents

**Number of projects submitted 2014 - 2018: 2,981**

**Number of participants: 2,167**

## Bilbao International Art & Fashion – BIAAF

A platform devoted to the launch of young promising fashion designers from all over the world provided they are talented, innovative and radically creative

## Serifalaris

A get-together in the district of Getxo (Bizkaia) which aims to offer a weekend of inspiration for lovers of design and communication.

## BIA Forum

BIA stands for Bilbao Bizkaia Architecture, the platform for the diffusion and promotion of architecture from Bizkaia.

## Urbanbat Festival

This is an international festival about urbanism and social innovation between the city and the citizens. It is a place for experimentation, learning and creating in a collaborative way to inspire innovative processes in citizens.

## BiziaGO

A Bilbao City Council project in collaboration with the Bizkaia School of Decorators and Interior Designers for the reactivation of the empty commercial markets in the Old Quarter, through proposals submitted by professionals and students of interior design.

## Open House Bilbao

One weekend a year, Bilbao opens its doors to the public, an opportunity for locals and visitors to better understand the city through its architecture and urbanism.

## Fun&Serious Games Festival

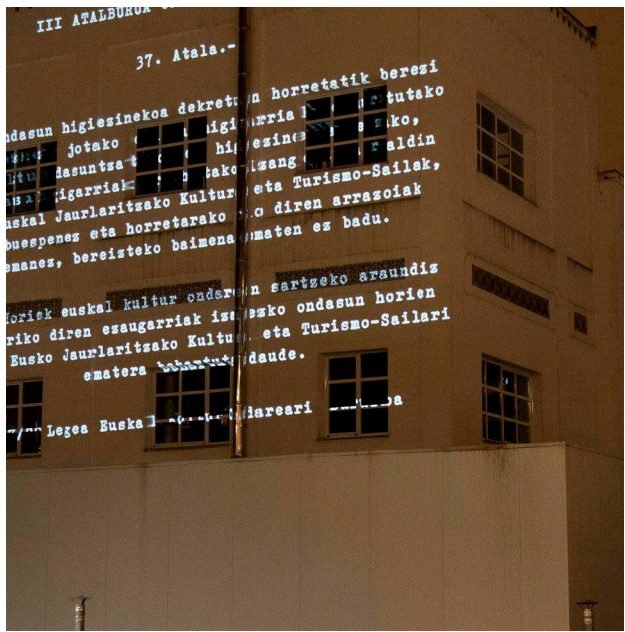
An event to recognise the best fun and serious games of the year. In addition to the games, the work of artists, developers, directors, producers, and all the professionals in the video game industry are also present, and are an important aspect of the festival.

## Bilbao Art District

This is a public-private initiative which aims to promote the activity carried out by the city's artistic and cultural fabric as a strategic element in its development and projection towards the future.



Bilbao Maker Faire  
 ArteShop  
 Bilbao Art District  
 Festival El Sol  
 Bilbao Art Fashion





## FIG Festival

The aim of this International print & art work on paper festival is to connect over 50 national and international galleries involved with graphic, contemporary, and all time art.

## Arteshop Bilbao

This program takes advantage of the synergy between commercial and artistic activity, fostering creative capacity in shops, creating an unusual space for artistic expression and improving the shopping experience. With this objective, students from the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of the Basque Country exhibit their own art work made expressly for the commercial establishments of the city.

## Bilbao Maker Faire

Maker Faire is a renowned fair for creators and inventors from around the world, a showcase for inventions, creativity and ingenuity for all, as well as celebrating the Maker movement.

## Festival El Sol

Ibero-American Festival of Advertising Communication.

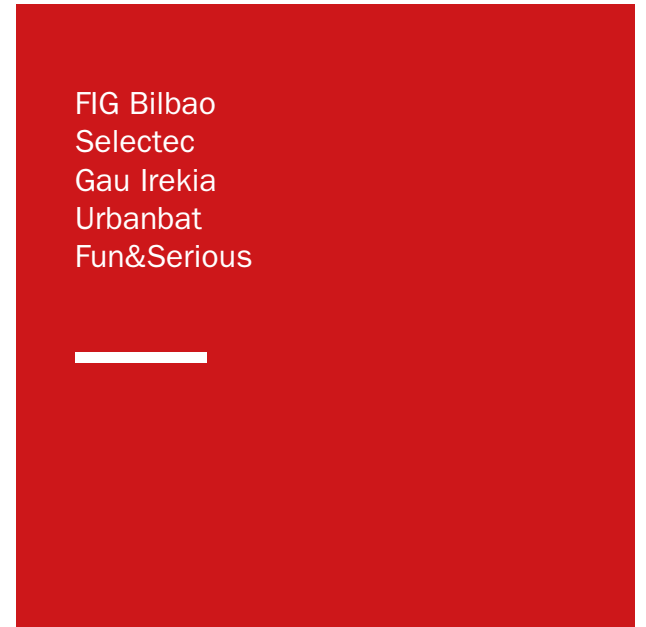
## Open Night

This takes place during the afternoon and night and is full of cultural and social activities that are carried out in different parts of the San Francisco, Bilbao la Vieja and Zabala neighbourhoods of Bilbao.

The aim of this event is to make sociocultural activity visible in public spaces.

## Bilbao Fashion Tech Lab

In 2015 BFT Lab aimed to create a complete community made up of technologies, designers, fashion companies and organisations developing cooperation projects linked to the fashion industry.



### 5.3. Calls and competitions launched from Bilbao Bizkaia

## Selected

Annual invitation aimed at Professionals and New Talents of design in all disciplines, in particular graphic design, product design, fashion, illustration, interior design, architecture, multimedia, art, advertising and visual marketing.

Participation is exclusive and free for professionals and students of design. All the selected work will be presented on the digital platform, Community of Selected and put before the Jury who will determine the selection of work for:

- Expo Selected
- Selected Book
- Diploma Selected
- Stone&Wood Award in the Professional and New Talent Categories

## Bilbao International Art & Fashion (BIAAF)

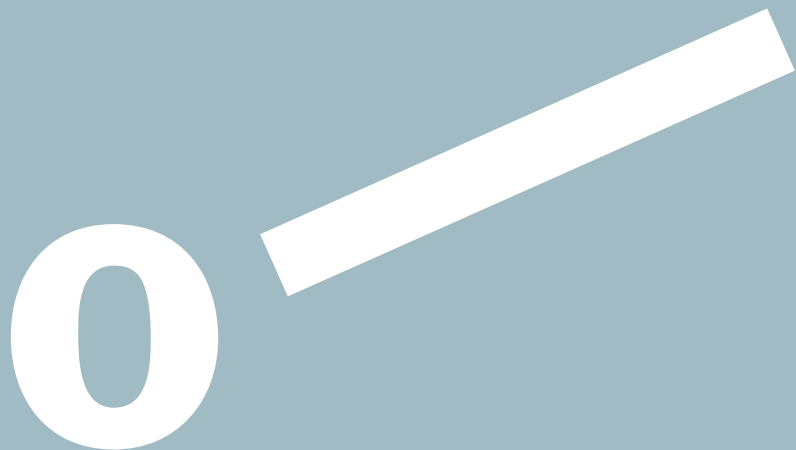
International Fashion Design Contest directed at emerging designers from all over the world, aged from 18 to 35 years old. It has the support and advice of renowned professionals from the world of fashion and art.

BIAAF's international scope aims for intercultural enrichment by showing the different approaches of fashion towards art and the promotion of fashion as a true cultural value.

For this reason, all work submitted should be inspired or be directly related to the world of art (printing, shapes, details...)

The main goal is to enable young designers to make themselves known to a wider public and the media.

**6. Major initiatives  
implemented through  
inter-city cooperation  
to achieve the  
objectives of the UCCN**



## Graz Design Month (2017)

Participation of three design companies from Bilbao, one at the Festival Selected and the other two at the Assembly Festival where the young designer from Bilbao, Eder Aurre received the award for the best collection at the festival.

## Human Cities\_Challenging the City Scale (2014 - 2018)

The Human Cities project is co-financed by the European Union's Creative Europe/Culture programme that aims to improve quality of life in cities by designing urban spaces in collaboration with the people who live in them as well as contributing to changing European policy makers' perceptions on the important role that citizens play in re-inventing urban spaces together.

Twelve partners from eleven European cities took part in the project: Tallinn, London, Brussels, Belgrade, Milan, Cieszyn, four UNESCO Creative Cities of Design: Saint-Etienne, Graz, Helsinki, Bilbao and one UNESCO Creative City of Literature: Ljubljana.

This programme has enabled lessons to be learned from other partners' case studies and from the experimentation labs and workshops organised during the meetings.

Several citizen co-creation laboratories have been held in Bilbao, which took shape in ten artistic events that show the intangible heritage of the area under investigation in relation to the role of women in this area.

## Students' visit from the University of Applied Sciences Joanneum - Graz (2017)

In 2017, a group of students from the University of Applied Sciences Joanneum of Graz, UNESCO City of Design, visited Bilbao to learn first-hand about the city's creative ecosystem.

This programme has enabled lessons to be learned from other partners' case studies and from the experimentation labs and workshops organised during the meetings.

Several citizen co-creation laboratories have been held in Bilbao, which took shape in ten artistic events that show the intangible heritage of the area under investigation in relation to the role of women in this area.

## Inter-cooperation with other Spanish UNESCO Creative Cities (2018)

In September 2018, a meeting of the UNESCO Creative Cities of Spain was held in Madrid to seek possible avenues for cooperation. Continuous contact has been maintained between these cities since this time and an annual day is planned. The first will be held in Granada City of Literature in February 2019.

## Meeting with Montreal designers during the Global Social Economy Forum (2018)

A delegation of professionals from the creative sector visited Bilbao in November 2018 on the occasion of the Global Social Economy Forum.

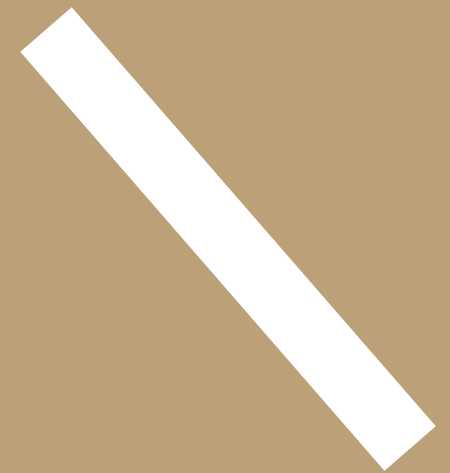
The Bilbao Bizkaia Design Council made the most of the occasion to organise a networking session between professionals from Montreal and Bilbao working in the field of social economy in order to promote cooperation between both cities and to encourage collaboration on projects.

## Participation in Seoul Design Cloud (2018)

Within Seoul Design Cloud, Bilbao took part in the “Human Cities Design Seoul” conferences, presenting the project undertaken within the framework of the Human Cities programme.



# **7. Proposed action plan for the forthcoming mid-term period of four years**



**The strategy for Bilbao UNESCO City of Design 2019-2022** will continue to pursue similar objectives to those proposed in the 2014-2018 period:

- Positioning design as a driving factor for business and territorial competitiveness.
- Encouraging collaboration between the public and private sectors using creativity as a tool to foster sustainable development.
- Exchanging experiences and knowledge at an international level.
- Promoting the creation of companies in the creative sector.
- Encouraging design professionals to pursue international objectives.

New objectives are also proposed for the next four years:

- Design and implement initiatives that cross several UCCN creative disciplines.

- Strengthen alliances with educational centres and universities in order to boost the city's creative talent.
- Encourage the use of design and creativity as a tool to foster social innovation.

**Initiatives to achieve these objectives:**

- **Bilbao Bizkaia Design Week**

This annual initiative is designed and organised through a public/private partnership. The aim for the next few years is to continue working with this collaboration model, utilising this annual date to position design as a tool to promote business and regional competitiveness.

The idea is also to promote each edition of Bilbao Bizkaia Design Week as an opportunity to collaborate with other UCCN partners from the Cities of Design network as well as from other creative areas.

Other cities in the network will participate in the different activities organised within the framework of BBDW (conferences, workshops, exhibitions, etc.) on exchanging knowledge and experiences in Spain and around the world.

- **Support and encourage other creative initiatives that promote the creation and consolidation of companies in the creative sector.**
- **Collaboration programs with training centres and universities.**

Work is currently underway on establishing and strengthening alliances with educational centres and universities that offer degrees in creative disciplines such as architecture, industrial design, fashion, etc. to design initiatives that foster creative talent in the city.



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