

Introduction to the Call for Projects

ADCV

BEST PRACTICES FOR IMAGE, DESIGN AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION RELATED CALLS AND WORK COMMISSIONS

There are international documents which address practical and legal aspects of design commissions. These documents have been drawn up by ICO-D, the International Council of Design, and were translated into Spanish by the Association of Designers of the Canary Islands. The Association of Designers of the Valencian Community (ADCV) has this information and makes it available.

We share the statement expressed in these documents which states: *“The most economical and effective manner to address a design problem is to hire the services of a designer, a highly-qualified and experienced design team or company and to collaborate together during the design process”*.

Nevertheless, and for practical purposes, in order to simply avoid the use of speculative practices (generally “open” tenders) and to replace design commissions, the ADCV, together with other groups in the image and visual communication sector, proposes an alternative option to that of the tenders, which is democratic and transparent, but respectful of the design and communication professional and with a guarantee of a successful result (which is not the case with “open” tenders).

This channel, called “Project Call”, develops the idea suggested in one of those international best practices manuals. It is based on making a selection among professionals through their work portfolio and merits.

Why are we opting for calls via the Call for Projects?

Basically as these ensure a quality result. And as any practice which furthers free work must be eradicated, as is the case with speculative tenders, where several people are encouraged to work but only one person is paid for his or her work. Who can afford to work for free? No professional, and therefore those persons who take part in these open tenders are aficionados who compromise an appropriate result (plagiarism, lack of technical criteria, outdated solutions). This type of speculative tender directly harms our sector, including those organisations or bodies who organise said tenders, due to a lack of rigour and seriousness, but likewise is detrimental to the final recipient, who receives a mediocre project.

The call for projects is a best practices formula in design contracting that is based on making a selection among professionals through their work portfolio. It likewise has the backing of professional associations such as the ADCV and a selection committee with a professional majority. Without forgetting that it gives meaning to the strategic use of design as that process based on the close client-designer relationship which ensures the successful conveyance of the organisation’s values and the coverage of its needs, always focusing on the user.

Guideline for drafting call rules for the call through Call for projects

The call rules in order to specify the conditions for the purposes of selecting the most suitable professional candidate include several sections, among which are:

- Subject and purpose of the call
- Participants' requirements
- How to apply (application submissions)
- Composition of the selection committee
- Structure and activity of the selection committee. Evaluation criteria. Decision
- Obligations of the parties
- Call stages

Subject and purpose of the call

Description of the commission to be carried out and budget.

Participants' requirements

Specification of who is eligible to apply for the call and legal requirements.

How to apply (application submissions)

Documents for the submission of applications and submission method.

Composition of the selection committee

Names and position/profession of those who will carry out the selection of applications. Its composition should be mainly made up by design professionals. Given the fact that this is one of the key points of the success of these calls.

Structure and activity of the selection committee. Evaluation criteria. Decision.

Activities to be carried out by the selection committee and what criteria will its assessment of applications be based on.

Obligations of the parties

Aspects to be agreed between the interested parties, once the commission has been placed.

Call stages

Specify the different stages of the process. Total turnaround time from the moment the rules are published until the designer delivers the project: approximately 2 to 3 months.

Aspects to be taken into account which are not included in the rules

There are other matters which are likewise necessary to properly complete the "Call for

Projects" process, such as that the remuneration is fairly paid and that the jury is paid for its work. Furthermore, specifying these proposals which streamline and improve the call:

The fees for the designer who carries out the commission must be equivalent to an adequate market price for his/her services.

Insofar as the work of the jury is concerned, said work must be remunerated. The provision of time and knowledge of the professionals who make up the jury must be paid as advisory services and expert collaboration.

Furthermore, if the call appears to be endorsed by professional groups, the calls must be forwarded to said associations for review prior to publication.

For projects entailing a budget of over 8,000 Euros, it is recommended carrying out the selection process in two stages. In the first stage, the professional jury will select two finalists and in the second stage, personal interviews will be held with the finalists and it will be the convener himself/herself who select the chosen finalist.

In calls where participation is high, a preliminary selection may be proposed prior to the in-person meeting of the jury in order to streamline the process (prior selection of 40% of the applications).

Other contracting formulas as part of "Best Practices"

In conclusion, the idea must be stressed that the Call for projects is not the only best practices system in design contracting. There are other alternatives such as the direct hiring of the designer or the call for projects through a restricted tender.

The restricted tender is carried out by convening a small number of professionals selected according to the subject of the tender. A fixed fee for participating is paid to each participant and then an amount paid greater than that of the winner. This practice requires knowledge of the design market in order to invite to tender the most suitable professionals.

The restricted number of participants allows for preliminary meetings with these participants, in which the commission can be specified or questions answered. Each participant directly submits a proposal, so that he/she can defend and explain the solution proposed.

The ADCV actively works to guide and support the implementation of this type of professional process.