

The capital has been chosen for the start-up of the first prototype for the use of latest generation technology - *Madrid Precious Time*

Madrid - an intelligent tourist destination

- It is the first prototype of the Affiliate Members Programme for the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) - an organisation that has its headquarters in the city
- *Madrid Precious Time* allows the visitor instant access to personalised information on the city, depending on his or her location, over a mobile device
- City and cultural tourism is on the increase. according to the ITB World Travel Trends Report 2013/2014, it experienced growth of 47% in the period from 2009 to 2013: four times as much as beach and sun destinations

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Being chosen as the benchmark destination for the start-up of the first prototype Affiliate Member Programme for the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), *Madrid Precious Time*, has turned Madrid into an intelligent tourist destination. This was stated by the Mayor of Madrid, Ana Botella, during the presentation of this project "which aims to use innovative and communications technologies to attract tourists - with high purchasing power, interested in singular experiences and staying for an average of between two and four days, of which each minute is gold - to big cities".

Madrid Precious Time, through the use of mobile devices, provides the visitor with a new perspective on the city with "instant, privileged and personalised information, depending on his or her location. It is time to make a commitment to such novelty actions that allow us to design and develop specialist products that bring differentiated and added value to the tourist," said Botella.

The final tourist product will encompass everything on offer in Madrid and will put its premium attractions at the service of tourists and tour-operators using new technologies. Each user may personalise this product depending on his or her needs and interests.

Madrid Precious Time, which is being developed in the Smart Cities environment, has an associated technological aspect that will allow the end user to get to know the city's premium tourist offering and attractions. A particular example is the future app for smartphones or Google Glass, which has already been tested in two of the capital's tourist areas that stand out for their premium offering - Serrano/Jorge Juan and the Literary Quarter.

Botella is satisfied that the UNWTO "has chosen us as lead players for this project due to Madrid's capacity as a cultural power, its unbeatable leisure and gastronomic offering, and because it is a benchmark destination in Europe for shopping tourism". The mayor wanted to highlight the fact that this programme arose from collaboration between the UNWTO, the Department of Industry, Energy and Tourism in Spain, and the Madrid City Council, with the participation of 31 private institutions and companies. "We are convinced," she added, "that we cannot look at tourism as a strategic objective for our economy and for the development of our city without strong public-private cooperation".

Urban tourism

The fact that there is growing demand for urban and cultural tourism is another of the driving factors for this novel project. According to the ITB World Travel Trends Report 2013/2014 drawn up by the consultancy firm IPK International, urban tourism experienced most growth - 47% - in the period from 2009 to 2013. This was four times as much as beach and sun destinations.

This new trend in the tourist profile involves responding to new challenges and opportunities. For the Mayor of Madrid, "the growth of tourism and its bandwagon effect on the economy marks the progress of the city" and now "big cities are competing amongst themselves to attract visitors".

Botella highlighted the year-on-year growth of 10.3% for overnight stays during January - a figure that "has been endorsed by the investment of world famous hotel chains in our city".

"Madrid is a five-star destination within easy reach. A cosmopolitan, open, modern and avant-garde city that is also steeped in history and tradition and full of monuments. A city that knows how to transform itself, progress and adapt to new trends in order to attract and surprise the tourist and make his or her experience amongst us an unforgettable and exclusive visit," concluded Botella./