

WE ALREADY HAVE "CITIES OF SCIENCE AND INNOVATION". AND NOW THAT?

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30 Spanish cities [have received today](#) for the first time the [distinctive "City of Science and Innovation"](#), which is recognized by the Ministry of Science and commitment for their important effort and commitment that they have been carrying out with R+D+i and their contribution from the local sphere to the change of production model. More than a year ago, when the

government presented the launch of this initiative and the actions that accompany it, [I already shared some lines on this topic](#). Mainly, that if it is a beginning, it is welcome, but it is necessary **to look for more, much more**.

The distinction has recognized no less than 30 municipalities. Let's say that if there are more than 8,000 municipalities in Spain, 30 does not seem like a very exaggerated figure, but it should still be put in context. Of course, the 30 recognized municipalities (see [list](#)) deserve it and each of them will have presented a good catalog of interesting initiatives. Avilés, Manresa, Cáceres, Gijón, Barcelona, Terrassa or San Sebastián are cases that I know of, some of which are references and others more closely, and all of them host **significant or at least differential projects** compared to the general average of the municipal economic promotion profile. But we could also say that it is an excessively large number. I think, like other times, of the initiative [Science Cities](#) of the United Kingdom. After all, the incentives/benefits that the distinction entails are not yet very broad and spreading them out among 30 cities (and let's remember that it is an annual distinction) may result in few tangible benefits for the cities for now:

Being part of this network entails a series of benefits within the framework of R+D+i and local development policies:

- * *Authorization for the use of the distinction in the communication and promotion of the city, both nationally and internationally.*
- * *Promotion and promotion of collaborative projects between the municipalities that are integrated into the [Red of Cities of Science and Innovation](#).*
- * *Integration of the Network as a reference entity within the MICINN-MITYC Working Group on scientific tourism.*
- * *International promotion of Science and Innovation Cities in international events related to R+D+i and knowledge-based development.*
- * *Preferential consideration of these cities for the location of scientific and technological facilities owned or owned by the state, as well as for locating nodes of the MICINN network of Information Points on R+D+i, (PIDI network).*
- * *Prioritization of these cities as preferential places to organize meetings of the department with the Autonomous Communities and other agents of the R&D system, as well as for holding congresses and seminars for their Public Research Bodies.*



[Map of unique scientific and technological facilities](#)

I can think of some ideas along these lines, not all of them as viable as it seems:

- Increase the **incentivizing capacity** of the prize, trying to integrate membership in the Network or, at least, separating it from the network, a municipal trajectory into the financing criteria of local economic promotion activities consolidated in relation to the transformation of the productive model.
- **Do not value containers but contents.** Article 7 of the call, which defines valuable innovation projects, has a lot of *hardware* (equipment, infrastructure, incubators, business parks, science and technology parks, museums, dissemination centers, etc.) . It is the easiest thing to visualize, but in this country there are plenty of industrial parks and there is a lack of important business and scientific projects with which to fill those parks.

- Find some formula to assess the **impact of the actions**. Something difficult to measure, but necessary. We have done many things, but what capacity for change have they had?
- Find some formula to assess the **tractor effect** in the territory. The economic function of a municipality is not limited to its administrative terms. Another impossible one, but conceptually it is the best way to understand the role that the local has in the transformation of the productive model.
- Transparent application of the criteria for belonging to the network to comply with the most "juicy" benefit (Preferential consideration of these cities for the **location of scientific and technological facilities** owned or owned by the state, as well as to locate nodes of the MICINN network of Information Points on R+D+i).

In any case, as I said at the beginning, this initiative is welcome. The [Ministry finds it difficult to act in the territorial part](#) of the science, technology and innovation system (an element foreseen as pillar 4 of the [State Innovation Strategy](#)), by the way, due to the distribution competency that we have, but whatever you can do, that we win. Neither are the town halls the best equipped administrative levels to lead the transformation of our economy, I am afraid, but it is true that on this scale we must begin to work and recognize the efforts of those who have opted for these issues.

More information:

- [Economic recovery, technology and new development model](#)
- [Silicon Roundabout, technology-based urban economy](#)
- [Nature addresses the relationship between cities and science](#)
- [The Ministry creates the distinction "Cities of Science and Innovation"](#)
- [The role of the Ministry of Science and Technology in the State Fund for Employment and Sustainability](#)
- [INNPULSO network. The role of city councils in changing the production model](#)
- [Plan E, local investment fund and financing of town halls](#)
- [The new local investment fund 2010. Now it's up to the municipalities](#)
- [An Investment Fund for Local Competitiveness?](#)

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