

InEDIC – Innovation and Ecodesign in the Ceramic Industry: Overview and results of an European training and demonstration project

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Abstract

Ecodesign is a well-known concept that receives considerable attention from environmental specialists and designers; however, in the case of the ceramics sector, there is a lack of know-how and training materials to support the systematic integration of environmental considerations in the development and design of ceramic products with the objective of reducing their environmental impacts in their life cycle.

The InEDIC project, www.inedic.net, (2009-2011) was an EU Life Long Learning – Leonardo da Vinci funded project aiming at the development of ecodesign training materials and tools to improve the eco-efficiency of ceramic products and build capacity amongst ceramic designers and product developers, thus contributing to the competitiveness of the sector. The project involved an international partnership (Portugal, Spain and Greece) adding up to 18 partners (research centres, training institutions, associations and companies) with proven expertise in the area of ecodesign and in the ceramic industry.

After a brief overview of the project and the most important environmental issues of ceramic products, this paper presents the results of the situation analysis, a study performed in the three countries to assess the training and knowledge needs the project should address; this was a critical step for the development phase. The project's main outcomes (training materials and tools), that were tested through demonstration projects in 10 companies, are also described.

The paper concludes with proposals for future work, given these two years' experience. Special attention will be given to the integration of the InEDIC training materials and tools in design courses' curricula: the approach adopted by one of the partners representing academia in the consortium will be presented as an inspiring example to other training organizations to whom these projects' results will be of interest. This aspect is very important to ensure InEDIC's multiplying affect and a wide adoption if ecodesign in ceramic industries.

Keywords

Ecodesign, ceramics, training, sustainability, innovation.