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1st Annual Report
September 2006/2007

Ecodesign
Centre Wales
Canolfan
Ecoddylunio
Cymru



Foreword

Ecodesign can have a significant impact in reducing our waste and landfill burden along with our carbon footprint. In our first year of operation we have begun to put in place the foundations which will lead Wales towards our vision of an ecodesign-led nation. This summary document taken from our 1st annual report outlines some of our main activities and progress to-date.

By September 2008 we are committed to forging partnerships and capacity building to put the initial foundations in place for enabling effective ecodesign in Welsh industry. This will be supported by informed recommendations to policy makers.

Notable successes include:

- the establishment of an experienced, committed and passionate team
- a database of key growth Welsh SMEs, uniquely based on qualitative and quantitative data
- a 'best practice' industry launch event
- recruitment of 4 growth Welsh SMEs onto the demonstration project focusing on the organic, low carbon, cradle to cradle and energy using products (EuP) agendas
- recruitment of the 4 Welsh universities offering product design education
- organising an 'Ecodesign in education' seminar with the course directors and senior lecturers from the four universities.
- innovative education resource pack and capacity building approach for design educators
- being nominated for the Welsh bilingual brand of the year



Dr Frank O'Connor

Context

The Ecodesign Centre Wales (EDC)¹ was established in September 2006 as part of the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to sustainable development (SD) and through funding from the Materials Action Programme (MAP).

EDC focuses on building capacity and capabilities in industry, public sector organisations and higher education (HE) so that effective ecodesign can happen in Wales.

Our message is:

Ecodesign = good design = good business practice

By building upon existing strengths and encouraging growth and innovation in competitive, added value sectors, EDC firmly believes that Wales can become a world leader in markets for ecodesign products and services. Success requires a multi-stakeholder partnership approach.

Ecodesign Initiative

Central to the activities of EDC is the delivery of an ecodesign initiative. Operating on a small scale with a priority target audience the initiative promotes creative approaches to resource efficiency. To support this work EDC advises the Welsh Assembly Government on related strategy and policy.

The ecodesign initiative focuses on 4 core elements:

- Industry: enabling ecodesign
- Education: embedding ecodesign
- Research: international best-practice
- Communication: positioning and promoting ecodesign

To contribute towards the Assembly Government's economic, innovation and environmental objectives EDC has developed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure and evaluate the various elements and activities. This process will inform policy and resource allocation requirements and help make recommendations for an ecodesign policy and intervention agenda beyond 2008.

Our Vision

Wales will be an internationally renowned ecodesign led nation by 2020 with ecodesign embedded as a sustainable competitive core value within all relevant government strategies and support services, industry, the design community and higher education.

Our Mission

EDC aims to actively inspire and lead the Welsh Assembly Government, public sector organisations and higher education to enable effective ecodesign in Welsh Industry. EDC facilitates the open sharing of knowledge and experience with fresh thinking and integrity.

Advisory Panel

An advisory panel of representatives from government, industry, HE and business support

was set up during the first year to support EDC activities. The role of the panel includes sharing ideas and experiences; providing informal feedback and making general recommendations on alternative approaches.

Industry: Enabling Ecodesign

A key objective of EDC is to work with Welsh SMEs from priority sectors including electronics and electrical equipment (EEE), general manufacturing, food and EuP. EDC designed a three-phase strategy to enable effective ecodesign in Welsh industry. See Figure 1.

To assist this process, EDC developed a bespoke multi-level Ecodesign Support Package (ESP) creating a unique opportunity for four Welsh companies to develop more environmentally conscious products and services.

A short description of the four selected projects can be found on Table 1. Regular meetings will be held to facilitate dialogue, discuss progress and provide guidance and monitoring of the projects.

A programme of timely awareness raising events and workshops support all the activities

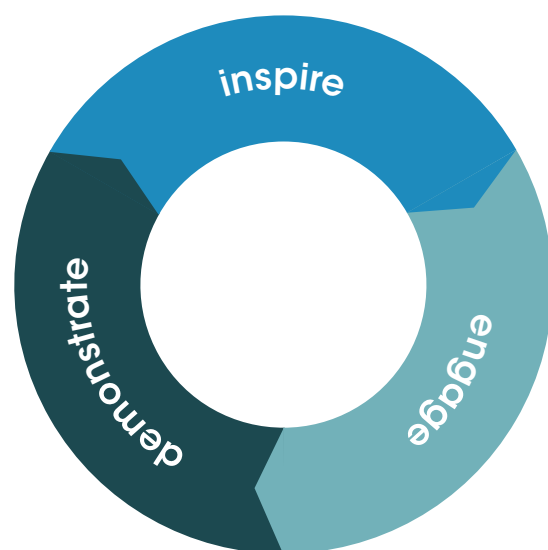


Figure 1. three-phase strategy

inspire

communicate the commercial and social benefits of ecodesign through a combination of inspirational presentations and engaging sector specific facilitated workshops.

engage

identify appropriate companies for EDCs support package and to ensure the programme of workshops organised by EDC are relevant and beneficial to their target audience.

demonstrate

work closely with 4 selected companies together with an ongoing programme of events and workshops for key growth businesses, business support and the design community.

for the industry element. Case studies will be generated from the findings and used to inspire the next generation of ecodesign-led companies.

Education: Embedding Ecodesign

Providing support to HE institutions is a key component of long-term capacity building and skills development for ecodesign and SD. A priority for EDC has been setting the foundations for embedding ecodesign and life cycle thinking in mainstream design degree courses.

During last year EDC has engaged with course leaders from the four Welsh universities offering established product design degrees – UWIC, Swansea Institute of Higher Education, the University of Glamorgan and Bangor University.

A set of teaching resources, key learning objectives, a training programme and evaluation criteria have been developed. These actions are complementary to the Welsh Assembly Government’s strategies and vision for HE, innovation and SD. The evolving curriculum and needs of industry make support for ecodesign in HE both timely and welcome. The teaching resources that have been

developed by EDC will complement and enhance existing activities in the universities. Additionally, the resource training programme is been designed to be transferable to other disciplines across Welsh HE and Further Education (FE) institutions.

Research: International Best-Practice

To inspire stakeholders and influence future policy a programme of continuous research has been embedded in all EDC activities. These activities are diverse and span the range from basic, strategic and applied research.

The basic and strategic research activities include maintaining an up-to-date analysis of international activity related to ecodesign and producing guidance papers.

The applied research provides support to the capacity building activities of EDC through measurement and evaluation. This will assist with the development of an ‘evidence base’ on which to make recommendations and future enhancements.

A KPI framework has been developed to provide valuable baseline data against which performance and attitudes can be measured

name	sector	core agenda	project
The Knobbly Carrot Food Company www.theknobblycarrot.co.uk	food and Drink	organic	packaging and brand/communications.
G24i www.g24i.com	manufacturing and electronics	low carbon	new product development and brand.
Orangebox www.orangebox.com	manufacturing	cradle to cradle	new product development and end of life management.
Global Laser www.global-lasertech.co.uk	electronics	EuP (energy using products)	new product development, packaging and communications.

Table 1. selected companies

over time. The applied research activities include:

- monitoring & evaluation (KPIs, behaviour additionality, counterfactual survey)
- workshop evaluations
- longitudinal analysis (short term)

Communication: Positioning and Promoting Ecodesign

A communication strategy has been developed by EDC with the aim of providing clear, relevant and robust information to key stakeholders. The main objective of the strategy is to promote the benefits of ecodesign while supporting the development of EDC.

The core EDC activities associated to the communication element proceed through a number of different channels, including holding events for the industry and education elements, keynote presentations at national and international seminars, attendance at targeted networking events and meetings, articles, research publications, creation of a website, as well as development of criteria and judging for a range of competitions.

The practical case study based website – www.ecodesigncentrewales.org - will support all of EDC's activities and will provide an ideal platform for sharing knowledge and experience.

Brand Strategy

Given the importance of brand recognition, a brand strategy has been developed which clarifies the role of EDC and its proposition to the key stakeholder groups. This has given EDC a clear identity and has been fundamental in enabling EDC to successfully begin building capacity for effective ecodesign in Wales.

Conclusion

Ecodesign is essential for meeting Wales'

environmental challenges of the future – including moving to a low carbon economy, reducing waste and encouraging innovation.

EDC has been established to play a key role in enhancing the competitiveness of Welsh business and the quality and relevance of Welsh design education through a unique capacity building approach.

The unique approach for identifying and selecting growth businesses has resulted in four SMEs committing to work with EDC to enhance their capabilities and in doing so openly share their knowledge and experiences with wider industry.

Getting the four Welsh universities that offer product design education to work together is hugely significant and their desire to make this a success makes the ecodesign initiative very exciting.

EDC is on a steep learning curve. There is no blue-print available for embedding ecodesign. EDC is working hard to create an open and honest working relationship with our clients. The feedback to date indicates that EDC has created the right foundations for long-term partnerships and capacity building.

EDC is committed to building on the successes of our first year and is confident that these practical design-led case studies will clearly demonstrate the business case to inspire a wider uptake of ecodesign.

Further information

For a copy of the full report or for other information about EDC activities and outputs please contact:

info@ecodesigncentrewales.org

¹ EDC staff are employees of University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC) who manage and administer the funding. It is the responsibility of EDC to account for the budget, planning, key decision making and the final delivery of the initiative.

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