



Ecodesign Centre (EDC) Fresh Thinking

EDC is a UK based applied research organisation that aims to build capacity and capabilities to enable effective ecodesign

www.ecodesigncentre.org

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1. Introduction to EDC

Who we are?

The Ecodesign Centre (EDC)¹ was established in September 2006 as part of the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to sustainable development.

EDC is an **applied research organisation** that aims to build capacity and capabilities to enable effective **ecodesign**. EDC was recently designated a Centre of Expertise by the Welsh Assembly Government and is recognised as the 'voice' of, and knowledge base for, ecodesign in Wales.

EDC is based in Cardiff and has administrative links with the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC).

What we aim to achieve?

EDC aims to enable, demonstrate the value and increase the application of **ecodesign**.

What is our core message?

In simple terms, '**ecodesign is good design and good business practice**' through the adoption of a holistic life cycle thinking approach, which extends the vision of design beyond traditional boundaries of production and use.

How do we work?

Our work programme involves:

- designing and delivering innovative and inspirational projects and programmes that address the commercial implementation of ecodesign.
- providing key stakeholders with world leading knowledge and expertise in ecodesign through applied research and international best practice scanning. EDC is the '**bridge**' between new ecodesign knowledge generation (internationally) and its commercial application.
- developing networks of partner organisations to support the dissemination of ecodesign knowledge and experience gathered from the projects, programmes, applied research and international scanning.

¹ Our name and abbreviation is Ecodesign Centre (EDC). Please refer to us using either 'the Ecodesign Centre' or 'EDC' (not 'the EDC' or 'the Centre')



2. Ecodesign

What is Ecodesign?

Ecodesign is a strategic design management process that is concerned with reducing any negative environmental or social impacts over the life cycle of products and services. This involves assessing, prioritizing and then designing out problems and developing new solutions. These can range from specifying renewable materials, improving working conditions, reducing the energy during usage to innovating the business model. Crucially ecodesign can make a direct difference to the bottom line through reducing costs, assisting with legislative compliance, increasing innovation, attracting investment, improving brand position and enhancing business communications.

Ecodesign makes a significant contribution to **sustainable development**. Therefore, building ecodesign thinking into future product and service development is crucial.

3. Areas of work

Making a difference in Wales

The establishment of EDC marked a recognition that if Wales is to successfully compete in the global economy, **ecodesign** must be embedded as a **sustainable competitive core value** within all relevant government strategies and policy, the public sector and support services, industry, the design community and education.

What have we done?

A key element of EDC's work-to-date has been the design and delivery of an innovative **Ecodesign Initiative for Wales (UK)**. The main activities of the initiative included:

Industry: Working with four Welsh Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) from priority sectors (food and drink, manufacturing, electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) and low-carbon technology) for a period of twelve months on commercial ecodesign projects. This involved facilitating, guiding, training, networking, running workshops, undertaking research, mentoring and coaching to support the development of more environmentally friendly products and services and embed ecodesign in core business strategies.

Education: Working with course leaders and lecturers from four universities in Wales to embed ecodesign and sustainability in product design education. The activities involved training and networking



sessions for staff, guest lectures for students and the co-development of a teaching resource pack on ecodesign.

Policy: Working with the Welsh Assembly Government to support the development and review of key policy documents, including the Wales Waste Strategy and the Green Jobs Strategy. EDC also consulted and advised on UK national and international policy.

Communication: Communicating the business and policy case for ecodesign through events, networks, the EDC website and targeted e-updates to a wide range of national and international stakeholders.

Research: Undertaking international best practice scanning, applied research, monitoring and evaluation.

What next?

Through the initiative EDC has highlighted the significant progress that can be made with SMEs and educators through specialist guidance, facilitation and applied research. To make this approach sustainable it needs to be embedded in a broader policy framework.

As the next step, EDC is undertaking a comprehensive **evaluation of the initiative** and provide further evidence based policy recommendations to the Welsh Assembly Government. This will be supported through ongoing research and communication. The evaluation will include scoping out how key learning can be transferred to the priority business support organisations (BSOs) so that they can then provide a more effective 'joined-up' solution to ecodesign support for industry. In essence ecodesign needs to become 'mainstream' practice.

4. Upcoming activities

Future work

EDC is currently seeking additional funding for a wider range of projects and programmes, including:

- using the case studies of the four SMEs from the Ecodesign Initiative to inspire the next generation of ecodesign-led SMEs through creating an innovative research and development (R&D) platform for SMEs with growth potential, designers, specialist academic researchers and BSOs. The ultimate aim being to facilitate a wider uptake of ecodesign in industry.



- developing an online Ecodesign Learning Platform (ELP) to enable further co-development of the education resources, enhanced student learning and cross-institutional collaboration and engagement with the wider community. The ultimate aim being to embed ecodesign in 'mainstream' design education.

The long-term aim of EDC is to continue to play a pivotal role in embedding ecodesign as a **sustainable competitive core value** within all relevant government strategies and policy, the public sector and support services, industry, the design community and education.

5. Contact details

EDC Team

EDC is a passionate and creative design-led team striving to make a real difference and proactively create opportunities for the open sharing of knowledge and experience.

To find out more about the EDC team please click [here](#)

For more information

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