



PRO INNO EUROPE

**INNO  
GRIPS**

**Global Review of Innovation Intelligence and Policy  
Studies**

**Mini Study 13 – Feasibility study on a  
European responsible design label**

*(Pierre Bitard – ANRT  
with inputs from: Barbara Jones – MIOIR and Julie basset – LL&A)*

**A Project for DG Enterprise and Industry**

**April 2010**



**MANCHESTER**  
1824

**anrt**   
association nationale  
recherche technologie

## **Disclaimer**

*The views, opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this mini study are strictly those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission. The European Commission takes no responsibility for any errors or omissions in, or for the correctness of, the information contained in this mini study. The mini study is presented with a view to informing and stimulating wider debate.*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this mini study – entitled ‘*Feasibility study on a European responsible design label*’ – is to explore the relevancy and feasibility for the Commission to develop and promote a European responsible design label. The analysis proposed is derived mainly from expert stakeholders’ interviews, complemented by inputs from policy and literature reviews.

The main policy background for this mini study is the consultation document on "Design as a driver of user-centred innovation". The consultation notably resulted in the identification of target areas for EU level policy initiatives, among which raising awareness on the potential of design *via* demand side measures such as labels, standards and awards, emerged.

Hereafter are the main findings.

**Section 1** specifies the background of the study and, in particular, points out the legal base within which a European design label would be developed. Two key legal texts frame the policy context: Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 on the EU ecolabel and Directive 2009/125/EC on ecodesign. Though both address sustainability in terms of the primacy of environmental concerns, they demonstrate that design is a cornerstone in addressing the complexity of sustainable development issues. In particular, through Design lenses, we understand that environmental, health, social and economic impacts of consumption are inextricably intertwined. Therefore, raising end-users awareness on design *and* uptaking by industries of design thinking –including comprehensive life cycle and stakeholders analyses– are supplementary; so, corporate social responsibility is an influential integrative driver for sustainability and competitiveness in Europe (cf. COM (2006) 136). **Section 2** presents a selective mapping of about twenty European expert organisations, which are active supports of ‘responsibly innovative’ products and services; ten of them draw on a label to achieve their missions. These labels correspond to member states level, third-party, voluntary multicriteria labels.

**Section 3** further analyses the design labels’ characteristics in specifying their supporting organisations, selection criteria and procedures and results. Four key features can be emphasised: they benefit from governmental recognition –not all through financial support–, differ in terms of scope and ambition as their criteria make it visible –their individual keynotes can be either “competitiveness”, or “inclusiveness” or “quality of life”–, apply to specific products, environments and systems, and their marketing policy insist on their holistic nature. Three major learning areas are then identified, based on the experience of the design labelling organisations: ‘Jury and criteria’, ‘procedures and organisation’ and ‘timeline and costs’. This covers practicalities such as: the importance of the Jury as personification of the sustainable quality of the label and of the high level of political endorsement; necessity of adoption of the most demanding set of criteria of all; linkages with existing labels, i.e. national/regional design labels and EU level label; the establishment of a new label takes time and is costly. **Section 4** gives a synthetic account of the experts’ views, in terms of the obstacles, drivers and scope of the label. It should be noticed that seven of the most renowned and impactful design labelling organisations consider that a European responsible design label is worth developing and have agreed to participate in the initiative if any. Interviewees’ verbatims are given as anecdotal evidence for the main drivers and obstacles presented.

As a global synthesis of the lessons drawn previously, **Section 5** concludes by providing a framework for designing options for a European responsible design label. The framework is

based on five key variables which determine the ‘format’ of a European responsible label: breadth of the scope of the label, content of the label, jury and endorsement, relationship with existing labels and funding. Three macro options [*no label; amending the EU ecolabel criteria; launching a European responsible design label*] and, for the latter macro option, three distinctive micro options are finally proposed [*betting on design transformation power; focus on services design; showcasing design, a European push*].

# TABLE OF CONTENT

- INTRODUCTION..... 1**
- 1. BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY..... 2**
  - 1.1. Background of the study ..... 2
  - 1.2. Main objectives ..... 3
  - 1.3. Scope of the work..... 3
  - 1.4. The EU policy context..... 3
    - 1.4.1. The legal base..... 4
    - 1.4.2. ...and its spirit ..... 4
    - 1.4.3. CSR as a key driver for sustainability and competitiveness in Europe..... 7
- 2. STUDY METHODOLOGY ..... 7**
  - 2.1. Desk research ..... 7
  - 2.2. Mapping of actors & selection of the interviewees ..... 8
- 3. MAPPING: OVERVIEW AND LESSONS LEARNT ..... 11**
  - 3.1. European design labels’ characteristics: selection criteria and procedure, outputs ..... 11
  - 3.2. Lessons learnt ..... 16
    - 3.2.1. Jury and criteria ..... 16
    - 3.2.2. Procedures and organisation..... 17
    - 3.3.3. Timeline and costs..... 17
- 4. STAKEHOLDERS VIEWS: DRIVERS, OBSTACLES AND SCOPE OF THE LABEL ..... 18**
  - 4.1. A worth-considering initiative ..... 18
  - 4.2. Drivers for the implementation of the label ..... 19
    - 4.2.1. Synthetic view ..... 19
    - 4.2.2. Verbatims ..... 19
  - 4.3. Obstacles ..... 21
    - 4.3.1. Synthetic view ..... 21
    - 4.3.2. Verbatims ..... 21
  - 4.3. Scope of the future label –a stakeholders’ perspective ..... 23
- 5. DESIGNING OPTIONS ..... 24**
  - 5.1. Key variables, a framework for designing options ..... 25
  - 5.2. Options ..... 25

## ***Introduction***

*“A comprehensive U.S. policy regarding sustainability has still yet to be proposed and cannot be written without the design communities’ expertise and experience with Cradle to Cradle eco-effectiveness. The professional design associations, sometimes in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency and the General Services Administration, have led the establishment for sustainable design standards as well as the understanding of the issues of sustainability.”*

Excerpt from the “Report of the U.S. National Design Policy summit”  
January 19, 2009

The Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN)<sup>1</sup> was founded in 1994 to improve, promote, and develop the ecolabelling of products and services. While many of the nation- and region-wide labels that promote environmentally responsible behaviours were created earlier than that, the founding of this international association denotes the maturity in the global awareness for environmental concerns, in businesses, in governments and in society. Indeed, adopting and implementing label approaches entails a collective process towards the definition of quality, i.e. the setting and application of sustainability criteria.

As a point of convergence of interests, the ecolabelling trend is multifaceted. Claiming unique attention to environmental concerns has also become a differentiating factor for companies, valuable on the market. Hence the mushrooming of more or less home-made ‘green’ labels affixed with declarations of conformity to (internal) virtuous practices. The eco-label approach which on a voluntary basis developed in parallel with the latter makes the genuine integration of life cycle analysis visible to consumers; ecolabels are awarded by an independent third-party – public, private or mixed – to products and services that meet environmental responsibility criteria.

The demonstration of superiority as regard the respect of the environment, which is intended to be provided by such labels, can but be delivered by an independent third-party; credibility and impartiality are crucial. Solid incumbent eco /responsible / sustainable labelling organisations mesh the European territory. Since labels, like other certification and assessment schemes, aim at going beyond current legislations, they tend to enhance

---

<sup>1</sup> GEN is a non-profit association of third-party, environmental performance labelling organisations.

innovation<sup>2</sup>, rather than hinder it. Therefore, a number of the existing organisations that award ecolabels are also innovation and design support organisations.

Indeed, choosing design activities and design support organisations as pivotal levers for favouring a wider adoption of eco/ responsible / sustainable labelling in Europe is sound and potentially powerful.

The designers' communities are among the professions which have a decisive (and growing) influence over the choice of materials used, production methods, and packaging and distribution solutions. The quality of products and services is primarily a perception linked to users' satisfaction. Because of the designers' amplified power, users tend to become direct participants in the design and production process<sup>3</sup>: products and services are getting more specific and more customised. The designers' roles evolve towards interpreters of wishes and desires of the users.

## ***1. Background, objectives and scope of the study***

### **1.1. Background of the study**

In line with the consultation document on "**Design as a driver of user-centred innovation**"<sup>4</sup> and with the results of the said consultation<sup>5</sup>, the EC has commissioned the INNO-GRIPS team to carry out a feasibility study on a European responsible design label.

The first three barriers to the better use of design in Europe can usefully be recalled. The "*lack of awareness and understanding of the potential of design among policy makers*" represented 78 percent of organisations and 76 percent of private persons' opinions. The "*lack of knowledge and tools to evaluate the rate of return on design investment*" was considered important by 64 percent of organisations and 62 percent of private persons. The third most important barrier, according to respondents was the "*lack of awareness and understanding of the potential of design among potential design customers, i.e. private and public organisations.*" So, raising awareness on the potentialities of design is deemed a priority.

This opens up for target areas for EU level initiatives. Among the organisations, "*awareness raising and design promotion*" is, by far, the area where public initiatives in support of design are considered the most useful. In addition, *demand-side measures such as labels, standards and awards* are frequently mentioned, particularly to support eco-design and design for all/universal design. Among the labels suggested feature "*designed in the EU*" (or "*in Europe*") and "*good design*" ("good" as in socially responsible and environmentally sustainable design)." We will get back to this.

Consistent with these identified possible policy targets, respondents notably suggest the development of standards and awards and labels as means for the EU policy to promote socially responsible and environmentally sustainable design.

---

<sup>2</sup> E.g. see the case of those labels in the construction sector, Bitard P. (2009), Scope for international cooperation on green building standards, Mini Study 08, INNOGRIPS, EC.

<sup>3</sup> The dichotomy between design and production tends to become blurry as the product gets closer to a service.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/files/design\\_swd\\_sec501\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/files/design_swd_sec501_en.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Cf. [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/files/results\\_design\\_consultation\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/files/results_design_consultation_en.pdf)

## 1.2. Main objectives

The INNO-GRIPS team's task was to explore, through interviews of experts, how the idea of a European responsible/ for all/ sustainable design label was judged and to present and compare options, if any. This study does not pretend to stand in for a comprehensive consultation. This mini-study therefore investigates the issue of responsible design and in particular the notion of the relevancy and feasibility for the Commission to develop and promote a European responsible design label<sup>6</sup>.

With this borne in mind, a checklist of questions was designed to collect the experts' views on the possibility of such an initiative: adhesion, content, barriers, etc. (cf. **Annex 3**).

## 1.3. Scope of the work

According to the above described overall objective, the specific objectives of the mini study involve the following:

- **Specific objective 1, “Mapping”**: Identifying existing labels and awards in the area of "responsible design", i.e. design which takes environmental and social/accessibility/"design for all" criteria into account, in addition to basic security requirements. The identified initiatives are to be analysed, notably in terms of their objectives and lessons learnt.
- **Specific objective 2, “Collecting stakeholders’ views”**: The mapping should reflect the identification of the interviewees, i.e. expert stakeholders of sustainable design (or “for all”) within their organisations. Some organisations should support national/ regional responsible design labels. When relevant, a key question was then to determine whether they would be interested in being part of the implementation mechanisms.
- **Specific objective 3, “Designing options”**: Within the EU policy and legal context, options for the Commission, and implications (advantages and disadvantages) should finally be evaluated.

In terms of **the scheduling** of the work:

- detailed assignment specifications were received on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2009;
- interviews were carried out from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December until the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2010 (reception date of the last validated interview report);
- desk search (literature review) was conducted in parallel to parts drafting and integration of stakeholders' views.

## 1.4. The EU policy context

The primary and immediate EU policy context for this mini-study is to explore the opportunity to take the suggestions that stem from the consultation on “**Design as a driver of user-centred innovation**” (cf. 1.1. Background of the study) further i.e. through the proposition of an EU scheme. The latter initiative would have to be in line with the future direction given by “Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”<sup>7</sup>. Launching a European responsible design label does fit well within the framework of the three suggested reinforcing priorities of Europe 2020: “Smart growth – developing an

---

<sup>6</sup> The initial ideas put forth by the Innovation Policy Unit (DG ENTR, EC) which commissioned this mini study are presented in Annex 2).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. [http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/complet\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/complet_en.pdf)

economy based on *knowledge and innovation*”, “Sustainable growth – promoting a more *resource efficient, greener and more competitive* economy” and “*Inclusive* growth – fostering a high-employment economy delivering economic, social and territorial cohesion.”

#### 1.4.1. *The legal base...*

When it comes to implementation, the existing EU legal context within which the initiative would take place, if any, is mainly structured by:

1. Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the **EU ecolabel**;
2. Directive 2009/125/EC of the European parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for the setting of **ecodesign requirements for energy-related products** (recast)

These two major legal texts (i.e. the EU Ecolabel regulation and the Ecodesign directive), which have been very recently recast, are complementary to the following other existing Community instruments:

- Council Directive 92/75/EEC of 22 September 1992 on the indication by labelling and standard product information of the consumption of energy and other resources by household appliances
- Directive 2002/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 January 2003 on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE)
- Directive 2002/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 January 2003 on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment
- Directive 2006/121/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 amending Council Directive 67/548/EEC on the approximation of laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances in order to adapt it to Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) and establishing a European Chemicals Agency
- Regulation (EC) No 106/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2008 on a Community energy-efficiency labelling programme for office equipment

#### 1.4.2. *...and its spirit*

First of all, **Directive 2009/125/EC**<sup>8</sup> deserves specific attention, since it gives a number of landmarks, insisting on key notions when it comes to designing perennial initiatives to support sustainable innovation through design.

The recast of the 2005 directive was made necessary because of the disparities between the laws and administrative measures adopted in member states in implementing the directive. The harmonisation of the national laws is the only way to prevent barriers to trade and unfair competition. Harmonising at Community level requires an extension of the scope of the directive to all energy-related products. The introductory section of the text provides a number of important considerations as regards the spirit of the law, many of them of general scope in relation to economic, social and environmental impacts of design.

---

<sup>8</sup> Directive 2009/125/EC of the European parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for the setting of ecodesign requirements for energy-related products (recast).

The directive recalls that most pollution of energy-related products is determined during the **design phase**. Optimising the efficiency of the directive implies actions on this specific phase.

The tenth introductory statement recalls that **sustainable development** also requires proper consideration of the health, social and economic impact of the measures envisaged, i.e. in addition to the overarching aim of achieving a high level of protection for the environment. Pursuing the latter aim has economic virtues, eventually beneficial to consumers and other end-users.

The twelfth introductory statement reminds that for **design improvements impacts** to be maximised, consumers' information must also be adjusted: the **products' environmental characteristics shall be displayed in a user-friendly manner**.

Introductory statements (18) and (19) stress **self-regulation** and **voluntary measures and agreements as best regulation practices which are to be encouraged**; they are said to be quick, cost-effective and flexible. In case voluntary schemes are used as alternatives to implementation, information on the following items are to be available for the sake of assessment: openness of participation, added value, representativeness, quantified and staged objectives, involvement of civil society, monitoring and reporting, cost-effectiveness of administering a self-regulatory initiative and sustainability. Annex VII specifies a list of indicative criteria that may be used to evaluate the admissibility of **self-regulatory initiatives** as an alternative to an implementing measure in the context of the directive. Among which criteria, the necessary involvement of civil society is important.

Introductory statement (23) specifies the use of the CE marking, one of the most efficient and well-known European-wide label. As made explicit in **Art.5**, “before a product covered by implementing measures is placed on the market and/or put into service, a CE marking shall be affixed and a declaration of conformity issued (...).” Importantly, the **CE marking** applies whether the product was **produced in the EU or imported from outside the EU**.

Article 2 of the Directive gives no less than 27 definitions, including that of ecodesign; “**Ecodesign** means the integration of environmental aspects into product design with the aim of improving the environmental performance of the product throughout its whole lifecycle.” And “ecodesign requirement” means any requirement in relation to a product, intended to improve its environmental performance, or any requirement for the supply of information with regard to the environmental aspects of a product. “

**Article 15** details the implementing measures. The first criterion indicates that the product shall represent a significant volume of sales and trade (“200 000 units within the Community according to the most recently available figure”).

Secondly, the **EU eco-label Regulation [recast, 25 November 2009]** aims “to establish a voluntary ecolabel award scheme to promote products with a reduced environmental impact during their entire life cycle and provide consumers with accurate, non deceptive, science-based information on the environmental impact of products.” (First introductory statement, citation) It should be noted that an EU ecolabelled product is automatically compliant with the Eco-design Directive.

## Exhibit 1 - The Main Elements of the EU ecolabel

Being a voluntary, market-based instrument, the primary function of the EU Ecolabel is to stimulate both the supply and demand of products that have a lower environmental impact compared to others in the same category. On the demand side, the scheme gives European consumers the means to make informed environmental choices when purchasing products. With respect to supply, the EU Eco-label has the clear objective of encouraging businesses to market greener, officially licensed, products. The "Flower" is the assurance that a product which is marketed as "green" really belongs to the high end of the environmental market.

The Europe-wide coverage of the scheme means that companies do not have to make applications in every country where they wish to market their products, and thus avoids time-consuming and costly procedures. The same logo is used regardless of the product group in question, thereby reducing consumer confusion due to the numerous self claims and green logos in existence.

The label is awarded only to those products and services that meet the selective criteria developed and decided in a transparent process with representatives from industry, commerce, environmental and consumer organisations. Ecolabel criteria are based on studies which analyse the impact of the product or service on the environment throughout its environmental life-cycle, starting from raw material extraction in the pre-production stage, through production, distribution and disposal.

It is for the producer, retailer or service provider to decide whether or not to apply, once the criteria are published in the Official Journal. The voluntary nature of the scheme means that it does not create barriers to trade. Foreign and Community producers may apply for the logo if they meet the criteria and want to market their products in the EU/EEA.

*Source: SEC (2008) 2118, Excerpts, p9.*

This mini study is not the right place for an in-depth presentation of the Ecolabel. However, the main problems that were identified during the audit, and which served as inputs to modify the scheme in 2009, are an introduction to the risks that would face a European responsible design label.

The two problems faced were '*low awareness among the end-users*' and (the resulting) insufficient '*uptake by industry*'; these can be considered (see below) as the two main risks run by a European design label.

Of great interest is the analysis of the underlying reasons why the Ecolabel's impacts were judged insufficient before modification; indeed, taken as constraints they can be used to delineate a 'security perimeter' to successfully implement the design label: the Regulation is too restrictive, **the co-operation and harmonisation with other ecolabel schemes at national and regional level are insufficient**, the competition with green self-claims is strong, the product group criteria development does not rely on a sufficient involvement from stakeholders, the administration of the ecolabel is too heavy, there are not enough product group categories, the usability of the ecolabel for public procurement is too weak, the ecolabel fees and costs are too high, **the funding is insufficient**, the implementation of the Ecolabel regulation through Competent bodies in member states is unclear and last but not least, **the Ecolabel does not provide sufficient incentives** for industries to promote their products with less harmful environmental impacts.

The recast addresses these shortcomings. Learning from 20 years experience leads to adopting from the start an opposite attitude. A key precondition for a good functioning pertains to co-

operation and harmonisation with national and regional level design label schemes, and so are an appropriate funding mechanism and a light administration.

### *1.4.3. CSR as a key driver for sustainability and competitiveness in Europe*

Within a broader EU policy context, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) represents a fundamental source of inspiration, and a rationale for, design oriented innovation policies. The 2006 communication<sup>9</sup> to European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee paved the way for initiatives such as a responsible design label.

*“Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. It is about enterprises deciding to go beyond minimum legal requirements and obligations stemming from collective agreements in order to address societal needs. Through CSR, enterprises of all sizes, in cooperation with their stakeholders, can help to reconcile economic, social and environmental ambitions. As such, CSR has become an increasingly important concept both globally and within the EU, and is part of the debate about globalisation, competitiveness and sustainability. In Europe, the promotion of CSR reflects the need to defend common values and increases the sense of solidarity and cohesion.”(ibid. p2)*

The CSR Communication encourages and provides elements of a rationale for the promotion of voluntary instruments, based on extended partnerships with business and all relevant stakeholders, including national and regional authorities. Initiatives allowing an improved citizens’ awareness as regard social and environmental issues and the impact of their behaviours on the latter are much encouraged. The EU ecolabel scheme is given as an example of virtuous practices which, stressing the social benefits of CSR, deserves to be promoted.

CSR policy tools are of the soft-law type and therefore considered as good regulation practices of new governance. They gather together informational, partnering and financial instruments, i.e. in the latter category, grants and prizes and awards. They complement legal instruments, to which they usually refer in filling up public policy gaps.

## **2. Study methodology**

The methodological tools combined for this mini study include the review of relevant studies, publications and EU level initiatives and the conduct of interviews with twenty experts of the field. The latter interviews were deemed a privileged source, which permitted to touch upon the stakeholders’ views.

### **2.1. Desk research**

Documents compiled and consulted for this mini study are listed in the reference section. They include EU legal texts, design and innovation supporting organisations’ brochures and publications and academic publications.

---

<sup>9</sup> “Implementing the partnership for growth and jobs: making Europe a pole of excellence on corporate social responsibility”, Communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels, 22.3.2006 COM(2006) 136.

## **2.2. Mapping of actors & selection of the interviewees**

We have made a reasoned selection of relevant responsible label design policy experts, based on knowledge gained in carrying out the mini-study 'Design as a tool for innovation'<sup>10</sup>, and contacts made at that time, and through internet search and advices from EC project officer.

Were selected organisations and experts, with design related activities, with operations in a member state some of which were also chosen because they are involved (or planning to be) in the process of awarding a responsible / for all design label.

---

<sup>10</sup> Bitard P. and Basset J., Design as a tool for innovation - Mini study 05, October 2008. [http://grips.proinno-europe.eu/knowledge\\_base/dl/550/orig\\_doc\\_file/](http://grips.proinno-europe.eu/knowledge_base/dl/550/orig_doc_file/)

**Exhibit 2 – A selective mapping of European expert organisations, active on responsible design labels**

<b>Organisation name</b>	<b>Mission</b>	<b>Label (if any)</b>	<b>Country</b>
<b>BEDA – Bureau of European Design Association</b>	Ensures permanent liaison between its members and the authorities of the European Union in order to communicate and promote the value of design and innovation to the European economy.	/	European-wide
<b>British Design Innovation</b>	Trade organisation, representative voice to industry of the majority of the most qualified top-end product, service, brand, digital and innovative 3D packaging designers in the UK.	/	U.K.
<b>Cité du Design de Saint-Etienne</b>	Located in Saint-Etienne, the “Cité du Design” promotes design through activities which are usually not carried out by a single organisation: research, education, economic development and value creation/development.	/	France
<b>Danish Design Centre</b>	Denmark’s professional knowledge centre for design and innovation carries out design and innovation activities to improve Danish businesses’ competitiveness.	<b>Danish Design Prize</b>	Denmark
<b>Design at the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA)</b>	Seeks to develop and promote new ways of thinking about human fulfilment and social progress, by providing a platform for ideas and debate, a programme of innovative research and development, and through the activities of fellowships (27,000).	<b>Royal Designer for Industry. (RDI)</b>	UK
<b>Design Council UK</b>	It helps Britain use design to build a stronger economy and improve everyday life, by connecting decision makers with the right design help to solve their problem.	/	UK
<b>Design Flanders</b>	Promotes contemporary and qualitative design to people and companies. Under the supervision of the Flemish Minister of Economy, Entrepreneurship, Science, Innovation and Foreign Trade, Design Flanders not only supports designers in Flanders and helps companies to integrate design in their activities, but is also active in making the general public aware on the surplus value of design.	<b>Henry van de Velde label</b>	Belgium
<b>Design for All Europe</b>	The joint European platform for social planners, architects, designers and others who believe in the potentials of their professions to play a vital role in the necessary transformation of our societies into more cohesive, innovative and sustainable ones	<b>DFA Italia Marchi di Qualità Start and Mark</b>	European-wide
<b>Design for all Foundation (Spain)</b>	The DfA Foundation, with the Design for All principles, wants to achieve that any user can access, use, and understand any part of the environment with as much independence as possible, and enjoy participating in the construction of our society in all types of activity i.e. economic, social, cultural, entertainment, and recreational.	<b>DfA H.U.M.B.L.E.S. and “Flag of Towns and Cities for All”</b>	Spain (Catalonia)
<b>FORA - The Danish Enterprise and Construction Authority's Division for Research and Analysis</b>	FORA ensures a fact based platform for effective business policy development; it enables decision makers to make fact based decisions that take into account the current and future challenges faced by private enterprises by linking the current state of knowledge to policy making.	/ <b>(cf. INDEX: Design to improve Life)</b>	Denmark

<b>French Agency for the Promotion of Industrial Creation</b>	Contributes to the bringing of culture, research and industry, through the development of tools and group actions so as to promote economic, social and cultural aspects of French design in France and abroad.	<b>“Observateur du design”</b>	France
<b>French Ministry for Economy, Industry and Employment, DG CIS, “Design and creation” Unit</b>	Support the competitiveness of French companies and public services by enhancing design capability of enterprises, by increasing corporate sector use of design especially in SMEs, by promoting French design internationally and use design as a vector for French products, by ensuring excellence of research and training in design, and by increasing funding and promotional tools	Supports both <b>“Observateur du design”</b> (APCI) and <b>Janus</b> (Institut français du Design)	France
<b>German Design Council (Frankfurt am Main)</b>	The “Rat für Formgebung” is one of the world's leading competence centres for communication and know-how transfer in the design field; it offers new perspectives for representatives of business and design disciplines, through competitions, exhibitions, conferences, consulting, research and publications.	<b>DesignPreis Deutschland</b>	Germany
<b>Hungarian Design Council</b>	Contributes to improving the quality of life and the competitiveness of the Hungarian economy with the tools of design. With our concerted efforts we want to create a flourishing country in the centre of Europe where citizens live in an attractive and healthy environment, respect and cultivate their traditions, assert their cultural identity and are aware that design is an important part of their well-being.	<b>Design Award</b>	Hungary
<b>Institut Français du Design</b>	Committed to assist businesses and professionals (designers, education & learning, local communities, industry fairs & exhibitions) so that design best serves « the Person, the Enterprise and the City »; its actions are based on the expertise of its juries (several yearly meetings) and exemplarity (selection of best practices, thanks to the Janus label).	<b>Janus</b>	France
<b>Koninklijke Tichelaar Makkum (Royal Tichelaar Makkum)</b>	The Netherlands' oldest company fosters a company culture marked by open minds, an inquisitive disposition, enthusiasm for research and experiment, the pursuit of perfection and the drive to deliver custom made solutions for every conceivable application of ceramics, especially in architecture. Royal Tichelaar Makkum adds cultural value by making the most of history through modern design.	/	The Netherlands
<b>Macstrong Sustainable Innovation</b>	A Catalan based research and management consultancy focused on three inter-connecting lines in the fields of sustainability and innovation. We aim to help produce, and contribute to, sustainable leaders, sustainable businesses, and a more sustainable society.	/	Spain
<b>Sustainable Consumption Institute (SCI), University of Manchester</b>	A multidisciplinary centre of global excellence researching major national and international issues associated with sustainability and encouraging consumers to adopt more sustainable lifestyles	/	UK
<b>The Centre for Sustainable Design at University for the Creative Arts (UCA)</b>	Facilitates discussion and research on eco-design and broader sustainability considerations in product and service development, through training, workshops, conferences, research, consultancy, publications, and the Internet.	/	UK

In addition to the eleven design labels indicated in **Exhibit 2**, the following other multicriteria eco-labels of public origin must be noted: AENOR (Spain), Milieukeur (The Netherlands), NF Environment<sup>11</sup> (France), The Blue Angel -Blauer Engel (Germany), The Nordic Swan (Scandinavia), Umweltzeichen (Austria).

The notion of responsible / for all design necessarily encompasses economic, environmental and social criteria and touches on a variety of products and services. On the other hand, there are a few, though influential, public labels that intend to deal with one single environmental issue, such as the TCO Certification for office equipment or the EU energy label for household goods (energy efficiency).

As regards the latter two types of labels, it should be noted that in spite of an absence of focus on design, design is always an important component of the labelling process. As recalled in the introductory statements of the Ecodesign directive, most characteristics of the products are determined during the design phase.

### ***3. Mapping: overview and lessons learnt***

#### **3.1. European design labels' characteristics: selection criteria and procedure, outputs**

We hereafter present (cf. **Exhibit 3**) the basic characteristics of eight of the most emblematic European design labels in terms of their “supporting organisations”, “selection criteria / procedure” and outputs, from which we draw a first set of lessons.

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf. <http://www.marque-nf.com/marquenf/pdf/action-et-performance-n7.pdf>, for examples of companies which have received the ISO 14001 certification, and in which cases design played a crucial role (cf. Groupe Martin Recycling, Europe's first “eco-designed” aircraft dismantling platform).

**Exhibit 3 – Characteristics of eight emblematic European design labels**

<b>Label</b>	<b>Supporting organisations</b>	<b>Selection criteria / procedure</b>	<b>Results</b>
<b>DesignPreis Deutschland</b>	German Design Council - Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, and Universal Design GmbH and iF International Forum Design GmbH	<p>“Good design” type of label based on criteria such as sustainability and social responsibility issues. A company can only take part in the design prize if its product has already received national or international design award. A further condition for participation is the nomination by the Ministries and Senators of the states or by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology.</p> <p>The award is judged by a panel of five professional designers and a cross section of 100 end users. Decisions for the Universal Design Award are based on criteria of accessibility, flexibility, intuitiveness, safety, affordability and sustainability.</p>	<p>In 2010, 45 winners were awarded DesignPreis Deutschland out of over 1,200 items nominated. In the product design category, five works received gold, and 18 others silver. In the communication design category, five more works received gold, with 17 silver awards.</p> <p>Being granted this title has proved to be a highly valuable economically for recipients. The mention “made in Germany” or “designed in Germany” is a major selling argument.</p>
<b>Design for All H.U.M.B.L.E.S. and “Flag of Towns and Cities for All”</b>	Design for all Foundation, Barcelona, Spain	<p>The DfA Foundation grants two labels, “H.U.M.B.L.E.S.” awarded to companies, and the “Flag of Towns and Cities for All”, to municipalities. Criteria, in both cases, derive from design-for-all principles: “good design enables, bad design disables”. To be more specific:</p> <p>“Design for All is design for human diversity, social inclusion and equality. Design for All aims to enable all people to have equal opportunities to participate in every aspect of society. To achieve this, the built environment, everyday objects, services, culture and information – in short, everything that is designed and made by people to be used by people – must be accessible, convenient for everyone in society to use and responsive to evolving human diversity.</p> <p>The practice of Design for All makes conscious use of the analysis of human needs and aspirations and requires the involvement of end users at every stage in the design process.” <i>Excerpts from EIDD Stockholm declaration. 2004.</i></p> <p>(Cf. also DfA Italia, below)</p>	<p>Palma de Mallorca has been awarded the Flag three years in a row; it is improving its behaviour through investments in new initiatives to facilitate inclusion. For a 400,000 inhabitant’s city like Palma, obtaining the flag costs about € 40,000, 20% of which are directly used to finance inclusion initiatives in Developing World Cities.</p> <p>The Foundation communicates the list of those companies which are acting according to DfA principles, but they also indicate those which lose their label.</p>

Label	Supporting organisations	Selection criteria / procedure	Results
<b>DfA Italia Marchi di Qualità Start and Mark</b>	Design for All, Italia	<p>Created in 2010 by DfA Italy, DfA awards' Start Mark' and 'Quality Mark' design labels to companies which have applied DfA principles to a specific "product, environment or system". The general concept calls for all the techniques possible in the current state of the art to be applied in order to minimise the performance expected of the user.</p> <p>Requirements must be verified on every occasion with target users, i.e. with all those who wish to use the product, place or system and are reasonably likely to do so autonomously. The categories of requirements to be verified are: physical, perceptive and sensorial, comprehension, process.</p> <p>Inclusiveness is the ultimate criterion against which this holistic view of design is to be gauged; using this criterion is a realistic way to take unpredictability (of the consequences of product/services development) into account. A good approach is to start with identifying the challenges faced and then to move on to a comprehensive stakeholders' analysis.</p> <p>The selection committee included the President of "Fondazione Valore Italia", the President of the "Triennale Design Museum" of Milan, the VP of "Altroconsumo, a Member of the College of the Arbitrators of Confindustria. The Minister of Economic Development sent his written encouragements.</p>	<p>A Design for All label brings advantages for the private sector –it expands a firm's market and sharpens a firm's competitive edge and makes it more profitable. A DfA mark also brings advantages to the public sector –such as, building on authorities' reputation for social commitment and innovation and improving local visibility.</p> <p>The first two labels were awarded this year to companies which deliver services; namely, Autogrill S.p.A. for the fast food area of Autogrill "Mensa di Ravenna" on E45 and BTicino for "Polyx Video", interface of internal communication and control post.</p>
<b>Henry van de Velde label</b>	Design Flanders, (Flemish Minister of Economy, Entrepreneurship, Science, Innovation and Foreign Trade)	<p>The Henry van de Velde label is historically rooted in the Bauhaus movement, where design is understood as a means to enhance people's well being. The criteria used derive from that principle, i.e. "good design must bring added-value to everyday life by enhancing people's well-being". The latter first and foremost criterion goes hand in hand with an attention to ecology, sustainability, aesthetics, ergonomics, ability to mix tradition and innovation.</p> <p>In addition, the products were either designed by Flemish designers in Flemish or foreign companies, or by foreign designers in companies located in Flanders; the proposed product / item is fully in place and was launched on the market after June 1, 2008 (for a submission to 2009 prize);. The proposed product / item is either handcrafted and functional and unique or produced in small series or (semi)-industrial and functional; the objects are contemporary and innovative in formal terms and / or materials and techniques and / or their level of creativity.</p>	<p>Granted to a specific product, the label is made visible on the product so that it can be used as a marketing argument. On the latest edition, 12 projects were awarded the prize (out of 180 applicants). .</p>

Label	Supporting organisations	Selection criteria / procedure	Results
<b>Hungary Design Award</b>	Hungarian Design Council (HDC).	<p>The objective of the Hungarian Design Council is to contribute to improving the quality of life and the competitiveness of the national economy with the tools of design. The Hungarian Design Award and the Moholy-Nagy László Design Grant take place on a yearly basis.</p> <p>The Hungarian Design Award is announced by the Hungarian Design Council (HDC). (Special prizes are awarded by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Office for National Research and Technology, the Hungarian Patent Office and the Hungarian Design Council.)</p> <p>The Hungarian Design Council directly promotes environmentally sustainable design, this being applied to a product's whole lifecycle as well as ergonomic and inclusive design. The specific criteria were defined in cooperation with universities in order to establish a clear scientific basis.</p>	On the latest edition about 80 design labels were awarded, in four main categories (Products, Concepts, Visual communication and Students).
<b>INDEX: Design to improve Life</b>	The Danish Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs, the Danish Enterprise and Construction Authority, Den Obelske Familiefond and Konsul George Jorck og Hustru Emma Jorck's Fond	<p>Founded in August 2002 under the patronage of HRH The Crown Prince, the Index is meant to inspire design worldwide that responds to the needs of people in societies, both developed and developing. Index: design to improve life aims at creating change by acting upon growing environmental crises in water, climate and energy and the rise in urbanization.</p> <p>The INDEX: Award is the main driver of INDEX:'s mission to generate more Design to Improve Life of higher quality all over the world. 'Body', 'Home', 'Work', 'Play' and 'Community' are the five INDEX: Award categories. The Award is the biggest design award in the world, with a total award sum of 500,000 Euros (i.e. 100,000 per winner of each category).</p> <p>In terms of the judging criteria: the nominated must substantially improve important aspects of people's lives or carry the potential to do so. The jury will evaluate three aspects of the designs: <i>Form</i> (surface, material, interface, colour, coherency and aesthetic of the design), <i>Impact</i> (impact or potential impact of the design and, thus, the number of lives improved by the design, the distribution and the economic and environmental sustainability) and <i>Context</i> (the design is designed to fit: the challenge or the problem, the relevance of the challenge, the culture and the geography).</p>	In the Body category, the 2009 award went to the "Freeplay Fetal Heart Rate Monitor" which intends to safeguard childbirth for mothers and infants in remote areas of the developing world where expert care and electrical power are in short supply. It works off-grid1, where there is no electricity to support a delivery.

Label	Supporting organisations	Selection criteria / procedure	Results
<b>Janus</b>	<p>Institut Français du Design</p> <p>(Ministry for Economy, Industry and Employment)</p>	<p>From its origins in 1951, l’Institut Français du Design has always been committed to assist businesses and professionals (designers, education &amp; learning, local communities, industry fairs &amp; exhibitions) so that design best serves « the Person, the Enterprise and the City ».</p> <p>The Janus is the French official design Label, created by Ministerial Decree on the 13th of November 1953. It is placed under the high patronage of the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry. It is awarded by a multidisciplinary and independent jury, which animates the debate through an adversarial dialogue.</p> <p>The Janus label jury-based decisions rely on five sets of criteria, coined « the five Es », respectively Economy, (A)Esthetics, Ergonomics, Ethics and Emotion. For the first time this year, an ecodesign mention will be awarded.</p> <p>Applications files are evaluated by Evea (French consultancy specialising in ecodesign) in partnership with ADEME (French Environment and Energy Management Agency).</p>	<p>There are 7 categories of Janus: Industry, Student, Healthcare, Commerce, City, Services and Ecodesign (2010).</p> <p>In February 2010, 37 awardees were granted the Janus label, the eco-design label thanks to a funding by the French Environment and Energy Management Agency.</p>
<b>Observeur du design</b>	<p>APCI (Agency for the Promotion of industry creation), Ministry for Economy, Industry and Employment, INPI (National Institute for Industrial Property), and OSEO (National Innovation Agency)</p>	<p>“L’Observeur du design” identifies and selects innovative designs, and awards a yearly label, “Stars of design”, special prizes and a novel “Award Lieu du design en Ile de France”</p> <p>The “Observeur” has received the “international contest” labelled by International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID).</p> <p>Criteria for the attribution of the label “Observeur du design Stars” are as follows: Innovation, user’s comfort improvement, cost reduction, form and structure research, meeting new needs, access for all, respect of natural resources, quality and originality of the approach, implementation of a global business strategy, opening of a new market, modernisation of a traditional know-how.</p>	<p>From its origin, more than 1850 designs were labelled “L’Observeur du design – Stars of design”.</p>

From the above-described design labels and labelling organisations, a few striking elements can be put forth:

1. The cited design and innovation support organisations benefit from **governmental recognition and funding**; some of them are public private partnerships, others are fully public. Therefore, **legitimacy cannot be disputed**, while some sort of attachment to national stakes cannot either.
2. Though all holistic, they differ greatly in terms of their scope and ambition. The selection criteria reflect this variety. Judging by the criteria, the design labels can be clustered in three groups according to three keynotes.
  - “**competitiveness**”; of which *DesignPreis Deutschland* is an emblematic example;
  - “**inclusiveness**”, of which “*Design for All*” *Italy* is an emblematic example;
  - “**quality of life**”, of which “*Index: design to improve life*» *Denmark* is an emblematic example;
3. The labels apply to **specific products, environments and systems** and not to an organisation as a whole.
4. Irrespective of the number of yearly awardees, and irrespective of the possible financial award (if any), the results of each labelling process are **presented as multifaceted** and cover “economic advantages” *plus* “inclusiveness” *plus* “quality of life”.

## 3.2. Lessons learnt

A wealth of information can be drawn from the practical experiences of the organisations listed above in view of the implementation of a European design labelling scheme. Hereafter are synthesised some that were deemed important; we will derive consequences from these lessons in the following sections.

### 3.2.1. Jury and criteria

One of the first messages that can be drawn from design labelling organisations’ experience, some of which can be several decades long, is that awarding a European design label that matters – i.e. that is susceptible to help promote virtuous and responsible behaviours – primarily depends on the quality of its jury. Not only does it have to be independent and representative of the various communities of design but it must also be composed of the best and most renowned experts at an international level.

The consulted experts insist that the Jury, this highly visible part of the labelling organisation, has to be present from the start, i.e. when the criteria are still to be made explicit and endorsed. The Jury will personify the quality of the label and will guarantee the sustainability of its spirit. Pushing this one step further, since the European design label would aim at being **inspirational** – to motivate designers and manufacturers to change their products in order to qualify for the label –; the jury shall include **high level ministerial/Commissioner endorsement** and powerful spokespeople and design “influencers”.

Irrespective of the implementation system eventually adopted (see below), **the criteria** for determining whether the products and systems are compliant with a European design for all / sustainable / good label will have to be **simple and easy to communicate while stringent**. Indeed, lax criteria would risk tarnish the reputation of those national level labelled designs with high impact. Therefore, the ‘lowest common denominator’ shall correspond to the more **demanding set of criteria of all**. If it were not so, a number of highly efficient national labelling organisations would simply not participate in the initiative.

### 3.2.2. Procedures and organisation

In terms of the EU procedures and associated organisation, a key issue for the consulted experts pertains to the **relationships with existing schemes**.

The issue is twofold: linkages with national/regional design labels on the one hand and with EU level schemes in the field on the other. Since most consulted experts were participating in the organisation of a design label, they were more concerned with the former than with the latter. As a consequence, they argue for simplicity and clarity in specifying the connection with existing national labels. In addition, if such a label is to be developed, it needs to be strongly backed by all European label granting organisations that wish to participate. For the same reason, a self-attribution model would certainly not ensure a sufficient strength and efficiency to this label.

So, specific efforts must be made to keeping clear and simple linkages (and distinction) with existing labels, especially when it includes the much spread notion of sustainability. We propose that a comprehensive and thorough study of design supporting organisations in Europe is carried out for the EC to decide to label them. The European design label would then be given to authorised labelling organisations, not directly to businesses' services and products.

As regards the latter (the relationships with EU level schemes); part of the issue for the Commission is that there are many role players within it, Directorates general responsible for Environment, Employment, Enterprise to quote but a few, who would necessarily have to act with one voice. For instance, DG Environment has an integrated product policy with various directives (cf. above, the Eco Design Directive). One possibility could be a Commission interservices forum on sustainable/responsible/for all products and services.

In an attempt to being consensual, one may consider that initiatives of this type aim to enable the strengthening of like-minded communities; more than anything else, it therefore requires energy to keep things going. The EC could provide this initial thrust so that the label is a 'hub-point' for designers that would gather the champions in place throughout Europe.

### 3.3.3. Timeline and costs

Design promotion organisations with a responsible design labelling experience insist on the costs that are associated with implementing the scheme. The 'Design for All' foundation (Spain) and "Index: design to improve life" (Denmark) emphasised that the establishment of a new label takes time and is costly. In the case at stake, the creation of a new logo with sufficient visibility at the European level must not be neglected. Clarification of the interactions with existing eco-labels, such as the EU ecolabel, will have to be made so that consistency and efficiency can be properly appreciated.

J. Berding (2009)<sup>12</sup> analysed the "Flag of Towns and Cities for All" as an international marketing instrument for towns and cities. J. Berding notably stresses the impact of "factor

---

<sup>12</sup> "Design for All as element of sustainability and competitiveness of cities – Analysis of the "Flag of Towns and Cities for All" as an international marketing instrument, University of Münster – Dpt of Geography, Diploma Thesis by Jörn Berding, Berlin, 22 June 2009.

time” on the status of quality signs; on average, it takes “**8 to 15 years for reliable quality signs** until the label is established and taken as a decision criterion for a destination.” It took about 7 years and roughly € 300,000 for the “DfA Flag of Towns and Cities for All” to be implemented.

In analysing the “Index: Design to improve life”, one of our interviewees estimated that since Index: costs about € 3 million per year, changing scale and implementing Index: at EU level would result in costs of about € 20 million. The latter would cover organisation, communication and exhibition costs, and not the winners’ grants (if any), nor the development costs, the logo, name and motto that must be paid beforehand.

For comparison, the Nordic Swan<sup>13</sup>’s budget amounts to € 7,5 million per year (exclusive of another € 3 million for marketing campaigns); created in 1989, with a current staff of 100 employees, it covers the four Nordic countries.

Timeline and associated costs have to be taken into consideration. The November 2009 recast of the EU ecolabel scheme - launched in 1992, can be considered as a reminder of the necessary patience when it comes to promoting changes in behaviours. For comparison sake, the yearly budget of the EU Ecolabel, deemed insufficient by the evaluators before the recast, amounted to about € 4,5 million per year; a tenth of which for EC staff (5 people), a third of which paid by member states for marketing purposes, while half of it went for member states staff (36 people). This has to be borne in mind when gauging the various options (see **Section 5.**).

## ***4. Stakeholders views: drivers, obstacles and scope of the label***

### **4.1. A worth-considering initiative**

According to our survey, many of the most active, renowned and important European nation-wide design supporting organisations which grant design labels judge that a “European” label is worth developing. The representatives from the following **7 design labels** have declared that they would be interested in participating in the preparation of an EC European responsible design label initiative:

- **Index: Design to improve life** (Denmark);
- **Janus of the Institut Français du Design** (France);
- **DesignPreis Deutschland** (Design Award of the Federal Republic of Germany);
- **Design Award** (Hungary);
- **Design for All - Italia Marchi di Qualità Start and Mark** (Italy);
- **Design for All – Foundation H.U.M.B.L.E.S.** and “**Flag of Towns and Cities for All**” (Spain)
- **Design Council Good Design ‘swing tag’** (UK) (forthcoming in 2010, as part of 2008-2011 Good Design Plan)

---

<sup>13</sup>Cf. [http://www.svanen.nu/SISMABDocs/Most%20commonly%20asked%20questions\\_09.pdf](http://www.svanen.nu/SISMABDocs/Most%20commonly%20asked%20questions_09.pdf)

A European responsible – or “good”, “sustainable”, ‘for all’– design label is deemed a good idea, even though not a top priority. The experts who responsible for their organisation would definitely accept being part of an expert group / committee which would deliberate on the idea. Most of the interviewees indeed insisted on the initial difficulty to agree on a common definition of design. This mini study **does not pretend to give such a definition**; instead, we defend the view that the indispensable collective development of the criteria for the label would be the best way to tackle the issue.

## 4.2. Drivers for the implementation of the label

### 4.2.1. Synthetic view

The main drivers considered for supporting and integrating the initiative can be grouped under three headings.

First, designers matter more than ever. There is an increased influence and improved consciousness of the design communities in Europe on responsibility issues, i.e. ‘the designers as interpreters of societal wishes’. ‘**Design thinking**’ is gaining momentum. With such an approach, the entire life cycle of the products and services are taken into account, which entails environmental issues are accounted for. Design thinking is CSR-compliant so that companies with a **strong CSR policy** are also those which tend to use design thinking. On the same line of reasoning, the European citizens are more and more incline to ask for responsible and sustainable products and services<sup>14</sup>.

Secondly, design labels developed at a national / regional scale often fail to confer a decisive visibility in the global competition. Creating a bottom-up **European design label** would **boost the efficiency** of the existing local ones, based on the fundamental shared **European values**.

Thirdly, in line with the second driver, a design label will be able to play an important role in the global competition in claiming values of **quality, of services and of respect of the person and of the environment**.

### 4.2.2. Verbatims

“I feel small design companies (industrial design focused companies as opposed to engineering centric firms) are likely to demonstrate an appetite for the adoption of a European responsible design label as many have a culture of entering design competitions and other means of achieving market differentiation.”

*Small design company*

“Such a label would certainly meet customers’ expectations and even demands towards companies, so it appears to be a good idea. This label should provide customers with a guarantee that the product they buy meets certain requirements – among those: environmental sustainability, non recourse to children work, etc.

---

<sup>14</sup> “Europeans’ attitudes towards the issue of sustainable consumption and production”, Flash Eurobarometer 256, The Gallup Organisation, Survey requested by the Directorate-General for the Environment and coordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication; July 2009.

It should be a guarantee for customers that the products and services they buy in their daily lives are designed in an environmentally and socially responsible way.”

*Danish Design Centre*

“Labels developed at the national scale (like the ergonomic label in Hungary) do not have a sufficient meaning and visibility. Creating a label at the European level is in itself a good idea. However, for such a label to have an impact, it should be made very clear what its value is for consumers as well as for companies, and what exactly are the criteria for awarding it.

At a European level, this label should be a very demanding one. It should thus be awarded to products and services that were selected among the best designed European products and thus only to those that meet all requirements one can expect from a globally “good designed” item: everyday life enhancement, environmental sustainability, ergonomics, security, aesthetics, social responsibility... and not only one or two of those.”

*Hungarian Design Council*

“It should express the combined ideas of high design, which has a rich precedent in European modernism, and earlier in European fine arts, and the common good. Europe expresses and invokes the idea of a common good more effectively than anywhere else.”

*Royal Society for the encouragements of Arts*

“A European design label would boost the intended impacts of regional/national responsible design initiatives. Virtuous user companies and liable designers are likely to benefit from the extra European mark.”

*Cite du design*

“Europe is a label in itself, and European values lie with cultural diversity, individual freedom, and collective responsibility. Translating these values in a responsible design label can be seen as a natural move.

Moreover, in the global competition for supremacy, Europe is losing momentum while China to quote but one, is gaining power. A label is an efficient way to claim values of quality, of services, of respect of the persons. Indeed the CE marking which indicates that the produced was produced in Europe is already a warranty of respect of European rules (The CE marking certifies that a product has met EU consumer safety, health or environmental requirements).

A “Designed in Europe” label could be seen as an extension of the CE marking that would apply to a wider range of products and services. Another option could be an overall ethical label which would guarantee that the products/ services are conceived and produced in Europe according to European values.”

*Design for All Foundation (Spain)*

## 4.3. Obstacles

### 4.3.1. Synthetic view

As it is the case in such contexts, the consulted experts were prolific on the issue of the obstacles that would hamper the chances of success of a European responsible design label. The major ones can be grouped in four categories.

Firstly, attempts to establish **criteria** for such a label would be vain. In particular, this would result in the **non-adhesion** of some/ many of the national labelling organisations. Contestations would be too strong from various labelling organisations: *holistic* and *consensual* criteria could not be defined. Both aspects are criticised; agreeing on a *holistic* design label is deemed too difficult. Experience shows that there are some long lasting labels of this kind in Europe, though. Also, a European design label would imply that all European member states need to agree the same criteria, assessment, awarding, management and monitoring process. In addition, and this issue must not be neglected, “design” has a variety of understandings –this reflects in the translations in the EU official languages; not translating raises issues in terms of communication policy. That is the reason why the materials associated would need to be multi-lingual (in addition to be a demonstration of the inclusiveness of design), with a multi-country franchise style operation in place.

Secondly, there are concerns about the potential of the EC initiative to gain the **critical mass** to make the label **visible enough to have an impact**. This refers to ‘timeline and costs’ as dealt with above (3.3.3). An option would be to launch a pilot project to better assess these aspects and learn from it, and design a better adjusted label.

Thirdly, some doubt that a design label, in the form of a “swing tag” or a visible mark, is the best way to convince companies to become more economically, environmentally and socially responsible and trigger the profound changes of behaviours sought. Provided that the label has a sufficient **visibility** and gains a **reputation of excellence**, it will make good design central to Europeans who will be sensitised when purchasing goods and services. The excellence of reputation is central; it should be a guarantee for customers that the products and services they buy in their daily lives are designed in an environmentally and socially responsible way. While **visibility** can be acted upon through efforts to quickly reach a critical mass –cf. above– and an appropriate communication policy, **reputation** results from the quality of long term engagement and absence of failures that tarnish the users’ confidence.

Fourthly, experts fear that the **label** becomes **the one too many**, since there are many others which are vying for attention (including the EU ecolabel). At the same time, design thinking has a lot to offer to the business community at large, and responsibility and sustainability have never been higher on the agenda. **Differentiation**, thanks to a well-organized coupling with existing national labels, will be pivotal to the success of the European responsible design label.

### 4.3.2. Verbatims

“The label should be a guarantee for customers that the products and services they buy in their daily lives are designed in an environmentally and socially responsible way. If such a label is created, it should be focused enough to be visible – it is necessary to avoid creating a too broad and thus too vague concept. This label

should be based on clear, relevant minimum criteria. For example: CO2 emissions during the product's lifecycle, social responsibility, etc.”

*Danish Design Centre*

“If such a label is to be visible and efficient, it is absolutely necessary to precisely define who will award it, and how. In order to define the awarding criteria, the many design competitions that exist throughout Europe could be a source of inspiration. It would in any case be necessary to reach a common agreement on the notion of good design, and what it should encompass. As for the awarding procedures, the respective roles of the European level and national standard / labelling authorities will need to be made explicit.

A significant aspect of the communication issue is to find a name for this label. “Design” might actually not be the right word for it, since the luxury connotation of the word in informal language is not necessarily what we want to convey.”

*Hungarian Design Council*

“For a new label to be incentive, i.e. likely to trigger changes in the managers' behaviours, many efforts must be done to convince and communicate; being successful from the very launch, with the best and renowned experts, is also a must.”

*Institut Français du Design*

“One difficulty would certainly lie in making a clear distinction between this design label and other existing labels (especially if the design label includes sustainability criteria).

The big, overall question is finance, and the reason is that the only way this idea can become something valuable and important, is by scale. This means that it has to be universally agreed to (criteria) and accepted, and implemented – ideally globally – and kept alive over time.”

*BEDA*

“There are difficulties such as: criteria for such a label, selection process and who is involved, longevity of the label, public engagement – how the label will make good design central to people thinking and behaviour change?, the number of products and services eligible – is there a critical mass of products and services that will make the label meaningful?”

*UK Design council*

“Should the label apply only to EU or also to international products and services? The answers depend on the label's main objective. Does it primarily aim to inform consumers about the products and services they purchase, or to promote EU products' and services' quality and enforce European competitiveness?”

*German design council*

“Creating such a label would not go without major logistical and financial difficulties. Some kind of business plan would need to be prepared for this label, in order to define what exactly we would like to achieve with it, who would organise such an initiative and how the associated costs would be covered.”

*Design Flanders*

“One may wonder whether the label ‘made in Europe’ might not be stronger than a ‘designed in Europe’ mention. ‘Made in Europe’ already suggests that the product has been developed with high security and responsibility criteria (in comparison with products coming from China for example), both for European and non-EU buyers.

Some industries are very proud of their national design and of the quality image it conveys (for example German, Italian design). These industries might prefer keeping their “German design” label or image rather adopting a less specific “European design” label. If the application, adoption and use of this European design label are voluntary, there might not be any problem.”

*Koninklijke Tichelaar Makkum*

“Establishing a criterion for such an award in the first place would be a hugely contested argument. Not enough is known about whether taking one action to reduce carbon foot print will negatively impact on another – hence counter-acting the activity.”

*British Design Innovation*

#### **4.3. Scope of the future label –a stakeholders’ perspective**

This section presents a possible scope for the label, as it derives from the synthesis of the anecdotal evidence collected through the interviews carried out for this mini-study. Not all dimensions of the scope are explored; only those which are deemed the most solid are.

A European responsible label would introduce a novelty in the European landscape of initiatives to encourage sustainability. Indeed, a triple bottom line approach to sustainability is promoted whereas in both the ‘Eco-design directive’ and the ‘EU ecolabel regulation’, primacy is given to environmental concerns. Focusing on the design phase and related activities allows a holistic view to be adopted.

The scope of the label should be **to promote the quality of EU services and products** and to **strengthen the European competitiveness** through a **distinctive sign of responsibility** and **sustainability** designed for **use by consumers**. The European responsible design label should be based on clear, relevant and demanding criteria. For companies, in particular for SMEs, obtaining the label must be a major selling point, expanding the market and making them more competitive through innovation.

There is a consensus to consider that the label should be **attributed to specific products and services** rather than granted to an organisation. For a service or a product to obtain the label, a thorough audit shall be made, accounting for inclusive stakeholders’ analysis and service or product life-cycle-analysis.

These two distinctive traits must be transcribed into a small set of sound criteria. As indicated above (3.1 and 3.2), design labelling organisations have their own sets of criteria, not all of which have similar ambitions.

Those existing labels which content best matches with this approach are “Design for all – Italia” and of the “Janus of Institut Français du Design”. Using the classification proposed (cf. 3.1.), they complement each other; the former promotes “inclusiveness” while the latter is more of the “competitiveness” type. It should be noted that sustainability of the labelled products and services is a consequence of application of the precepts and criteria to their design. A system designed in a sustainable and responsible way shall improve people’s lives and make the smallest possible impact on the planet.

**Exhibit 4 – Two illustrative complementary sources of inspiration for a European responsible design label: *Design for all – Italia* and *Institut Français du design***

	<i>Precepts</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
<b>Design for all – Italia</b>	A DfA product, place or system: valorises human diversity, promotes social inclusion and equality, is easy and pleasant for all potential users to use, generates no physical or psychological ghettos, is attractive, is socially, environmentally and economically sustainable, and has the ultimate aim of improving the quality of everyone’s life.	The general concept calls for all the techniques possible in the current state of the art to be applied in order to minimise the performance expected of the user.  The categories of requirements to be verified are: physical, perceptive and sensorial, comprehension, process.
<b>Institut Français du design Janus</b>	A Janus product, place or system must be a valuable investment for altogether « the Person, the Enterprise and the City ».	The Juries decisions are based on five sets of criteria, coined « the five Es », respectively <b>E</b> conomy, ( <b>A</b> ) <b>E</b> sthetics, <b>E</b> rgonomics, <b>E</b> thics and <b>E</b> motion.

The label attribution should be organised along various categories so that it can stick to the diversified reality of the industries. Propositions are to distinguish between B2C (eco-friendliness) and B2B businesses (rather technical standards); or between types of designs, such as Product, Service, Visual Communication, or Concept; or diverse domains, such as industry, students, healthcare, commerce and City.

There are two main reasons for not burdening the design label with notions of “sustainability” or “responsibility” or “for all”. First, it will allow **avoiding confusion with existing initiatives** at a European and national /regional levels; in addition, the pivotal notion here is design. Second, in essence, **Europe is a positive and powerful label**: European values lie with cultural diversity, individual freedom, and collective responsibility. Translating these values in a responsible design label is at stake. Intertwining label, Europe and design will claim values of quality, of services and of respect of the person. These are the reasons why we propose **DESIGNed in Europe!** as a possible label name.

**5. Designing options**

The better the European responsible design label is designed the better the chances that it achieves its objectives. With this borne in mind, the multiple facets of the implementation are hereafter envisaged in an analytical way.

## 5.1. Key variables, a framework for designing options

Based on the discussion above, the key variables which determine the options for a European responsible design label are the following:

- **The breadth of scope of the label:** it can apply to products and/or services, for a large or group of products/services or not, and to products designed and/ or produced in Europe or not;
- **The content of the label:** even if a holistic approach is adopted, priority can be given to ‘inclusiveness’, to ‘competitiveness’ or ‘quality of life’;
- **Jury and endorsement:** the Jury can be more or less multisectoral, more or less multidisciplinary, and more or less representative from the various member states; ministerial representation can be of the highest level or less so;
- **Relationship with existing schemes:** of foremost importance are the linkages with national/ regional design labels which can be organised according to a weak or strong association – see substitution; relationships with European schemes have also to be clarified, according to similar forms.
- **Funding:** can be modest or high, more or less on the EC’s expenses vs. on the national organisations’, for a longer or shorter term, and can aim at autonomy or not (self-funding mode to be determined according to business plan). It should be reminded that ‘funding’ is not independent from key variables presented above.

## 5.2. Options

The following presentation of tentative options intends to set the scene for decision at the EU level. Combining the variables can lead to the following options - given here as illustrative examples (more can be developed by “playing” with the values of the each of the variables):

### **Option 1: No European responsible / sustainable / for all design label**

This option should be chosen if the arguments presented in this mini study in favour of a European design label are considered as insufficiently convincing.

### **Option 2: Working on amending the Ecolabel criteria to focus on design and expand its content coverage to take social responsibility on board**

This option depends of DG ENTR’s will and ability to convince of the centrality of design in achieving the triple bottom line. Elements of a rationale for that may be found in this mini study. This shall be done according to the procedure set in the Ecolabel regulation (EC) 66/2010, for development and revision of the criteria, i.e. cf. Article 7 and Article 8 and Annex I. In any instance (cf. Art. 14) a window of opportunity will open by 19 February 2015.

### **Option 3: Launching a European responsible / sustainable design label**

#### **Option 3-1: ‘Betting on design transformation power’**

A broad scope label is delivered by a European high-level Jury, with Ministerial endorsement and a substantial financial price to any types of products and services, provided that they were already labelled at national level and are nominated by national organisations. Awardee designs benefit from the European design label ‘*swing tag*’ on their products and from an adequate marketing support. A pluri-annual financing is planned together with an EU level organisational support; funding renewal is related to performance indicators.

- In line with the specific efforts that must be made to keep clear and simple linkages (and distinction) with existing labels, a thorough study of design supporting organisations in Europe could be carried out for the EC to decide to label them. The design label could even be given to authorised labelling organisations, and not directly to businesses' services and products.
- A business plan has to be prepared beforehand for the label so that the objectives and therefore performance indicators are made explicit. Would a 'pilot' be put in place, testing the extent to which the project's economy matches expectations would certainly be a major purpose.
- Without a sufficient international renown, the label will not be attractive enough since large OEMs are business on an international scale. Unless the label is recognised as a major selling argument i.e. unless it is considered a strong and credible indicator of responsible actions by the consumers, no businesses will go through the complicated and costly process. For a new label to be efficient, it has to be incentive enough for applicants that the management's behaviours can be affected and eventually positively modified. One of the missions of the EC implementing organisation is to market the label at international scale, i.e. beyond European borders.
- In terms of the governance:
  - The high-level design experts working group could be an 'Advisory Board': the relevant and motivated high level experts are to be gathered together and meet at regular intervals first to define and then to ensure that the criteria remain relevant and up-to-date. The mission of this "policy board" would be to continue to develop and adapt the long-term strategy of the scheme, as well as integrate the label in various policies being developed.
  - The European responsible design label 'operations team': a team of competent and motivated people would have to be set up to manage the label professionally on the long run: communication, animation and involvement of the communities, collection of examples of applications, and management of the network of national / regional contact points.
  - NB: The administration of the label by regional and national design promotion organisations will certainly allow an optimisation process of the funding. However, resources in general and funding in particular are scarce within these organisations, with large variations, which variations imply disparity in the quality of the labelling process. This would better be avoided: maintaining such a label at the desired level requires considerable funds and a solid professional set-up to organise it. Coordination and cooperation with the authorised national and regional labelling organisations and development of joint marketing initiatives.
- The EC could create a European Design Label Foundation, association of the authorised network of national/ regional design supporting organisations. The Foundation would be evaluated after a reasonable period of operation; only by giving clear mission and quantitative and qualitative objectives can this be done. The Foundation would manage the funding.

### **Option 3-2: ‘Focus on services design’**

The European responsible design label specialises in **services design**, irrespective of the sector, and encompasses social innovation<sup>15</sup>. The applicants must be labelled by national/ regional design support organisations and nominated by them. The label is delivered by a European high-level Jury, with Ministerial endorsement and a substantial financial prize. Awardee designs benefit from the European design label mark in a format made visible on their environments/ systems and from an adequate marketing support for EU countries. A pluri-annual financing is planned together with an EU level organisational support; funding renewal is related to performance indicators.

- The authorised or recognised national/ regional label granting organisations would be selected because they subscribe to the CSR approach (as detailed in COM (2006) 136). A service awarded a responsible design label will therefore have to be submitted to consistent and regular reviewing. By comparison, under the “*Design for all*” Italy label, once the Start Label has been awarded, a yearly auditing process is necessary to benefit for the Mark itself (see the first two labels attributed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2010). A large and solid participation from the businesses will therefore be necessary

### **Option 3-3: ‘Showcasing design, a European push’**

The EC organises an interservices forum on sustainable design of products and services and, in parallel, supports a high level group of design experts to develop a brief charter-type of document on responsible design; the charter is available on a dedicated Commission website, in EU official languages. So is access to a self-assessment on-line tool so that companies / public sector which intend to qualify can check whether their conduct is compliant. In case it is, the European design label marking can be affixed onto their products or made visible on the site of service delivery. The promotion of the label and associated website would be made through national design support organisations, the representatives of which would have been consulted to establish the set of criteria. Compliance with the CEN work could also be sought.

- Part of the organisation of the implementation of the label would consist of a hub-point, a platform for creating and animating communities of interest in Europe *via* a dedicated website. A lot of energy is required to maintain the communities alive. We propose that the Commission provides the initial thrust and subsequent ongoing coordination. Under the same umbrella website, a charter document, short, immediate, useable and accessible would usefully be displayed. A European contest best design contest could be launched to develop the application for self-assessment.
- A possibility to be investigated is to develop “European Guidelines for designers on responsible design” jointly with CEN. “Case studies” of successful award winners would have to be displayed on the dedicated website. Under this assumption, the main drawback is the long, perilous and costly process through which the label would have to go before going public and, even longer before being used.
- The high level experts working group could explore the possibility to connect with relevant CEN working groups to organise a lean process aimed at developing the guidelines.

---

<sup>15</sup> Cf. the first two Design-for-All Italy awardees in March 2010 were in services. Cf. Europe 2020, the ‘Flagship initiatives’ encapsulate a notion of the importance of the services to the EU growth.

## References

- APPLE, 2009, *Apple Supplier Code of Conduct*, [http://images.apple.com/supplierresponsibility/pdf/Supplier\\_Code\\_of\\_Conduct\\_V3\\_1.pdf](http://images.apple.com/supplierresponsibility/pdf/Supplier_Code_of_Conduct_V3_1.pdf)
- British Standard Institutions, 2009, *Top-10-Standards that matter to consumers*, BSI Group, London, December.
- Carbone J., 2008, *Corporate Social Responsibility Report: Buyers audit suppliers' ethics*, *Purchasing*, 13 November.
- Davey, C. L., Wootton, A. B., Boyko, C. T. and R.Cooper, 2005, *From Sustainability to Socially Responsible Design*, A Paper for the Design Synergy21 Group, Design for the 21st Century programme, 2nd November.
- Design Council, 2008, *The Good Design Plan - National design strategy and Design Council delivery plan 2008–11*, London, <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/Documents/Documents/Publications/TheGoodDesignPlan.pdf>
- Design for All – Italia, 2010, *I marchi DfA 2009 – 2010*, Press release, 20 January.
- Design for All Foundation, 2006, *Presentation*, Barcelona, <http://www.designforall.org/en/downloads/dossier-DfA-Fd-ang.pdf>
- EC, 2006, *Implementing the partnership for growth and jobs: making Europe a pole of excellence on corporate social responsibility*”, Communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels, 22.3.2006 COM(2006) 136.
- EC, 2007, *Impact Assessment of the potential impacts of an EU Ecolabel product group for Printed Paper Products*, [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/ecolabelled\\_products/categories/pdf/2007\\_impact\\_analysis.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/ecolabelled_products/categories/pdf/2007_impact_analysis.pdf)
- EC, 2008, *Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the Proposal for a regulation of the european parliament and of the council on a Community Ecolabel scheme*, Impact Assessment SEC(2008) 2118.
- EC, 2008, *Study on the Costs and Benefits of Environmental Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) to Registered Organisations*, Final Report to DG Environment, Milieu Ltd and Risk and Policy Analysis Ltd for of the European Commission.
- EFTA, 2007, *Study on certification and marks in Europe*, European Free Trade Association (EFTA), December.
- EIDD, 2004, *The European Institute for Design and Disability Stockholm Declaration*, 9 May, Stockholm.
- Hu Yang, 2009, *Bosch continues policies of visionary founder*, *Business Daily Update*, 10 December.
- IDEO, 2009, *Human Centered Design – Fieldguide*, <http://www.ideo.com/work/item/human-centered-design-toolkit/>
- Kootstra, Gert L. 2009; *The incorporation of design management in today's business practices - An analysis of design management practices in Europe*, The Hague and INHOLLAND University, Rotterdam
- Kranker T., 2009, *Commendation Award - Environment Sustainability to Symbolize Korea*, *The Korea Times*, 29 October.
- Lovett, G. 2008, *Design Council flies proposal for sustainable kitemark*, *Design Week*, 12 June.

- Official Journal of the European Communities, 1992, *Council Directive 92/75/EEC of 22 September 1992 on the indication by labelling and standard product information of the consumption of energy and other resources by household appliances.*
- Official Journal of the European Communities, 2002, *Regulation (EC) no 1980/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 July 2000 on a revised Community eco-label award scheme.*
- Official Journal of the European Union, 2009, *Directive 2009/125/EC of the European parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for the setting of ecodesign requirements for energy-related products (recast).*
- Official Journal of the European Union, 2010, *Regulation (ec) no 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the EU Ecolabel, 31 January.*
- Philby, C. 2010, Less Was More, *The independent*, 16 January.
- Simpson, D. 2009, *ISO Social responsibility Guidance Standard – Sneak Preview*, Presentation InterPraxis, 14 May, Quebec.
- Sotamaa, Y. 2008, *The Kyoto Design Declaration*; a statement of commitment by the members of Cumulus, the International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design and Media, <http://www.aiga.org/content.cfm/kyoto-design-declaration>
- Stone J., and L. Rigsby, 2009, *A Client's Guide to Design: How to Get the Most Out of the Process*, Design Business and Ethics, AIGA, New York.
- The Gallup Organisation, 2009, *Europeans' attitudes towards the issue of sustainable consumption and production*, Flash Eurobarometer 256, Survey requested by the Directorate-General for the Environment and coordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication; July.
- Thøgersen, J. 2000, Psychological Determinants of Paying Attention to Eco-Labels in Purchase Decisions: Model Development and Multinational Validation, *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 23: 285–313.
- Thøgersen, J., Jørgensen, A. K., Sandager, S. 2002, *Consumer decision-making of a green everyday product*, Aarhus School of Business.
- Tunstall, E. D. 2009, *Report of the U.S. National Design Policy Summit*, 19 January, Washington.
- Twigg, M. 2010, *The imminent death of green design*, n1 creative ltd, London.
- Warson, A. 2007, Hungry Bets on Design, *BusinessWeek*, 6 February.

## ***ANNEX 1: LIST OF EXPERTS INTERVIEWED FOR THE STUDY***

**Christian Scherfig**, Managing Director of the Danish Design Centre

**Judith Várhelyi**, Director of the Hungarian Design Council

**Jan Tichelaar**, General Manager of Koninklijke Tichelaar Makkum

**Steven MacGregor**, Founder and partner at Macstrong Sustainable Innovation

**Maxine Horn**, CEO of British Design Innovation

**Isabelle Verilhac**, Responsible for Design and economic development at Cité du Design de Saint-Etienne

**Finn Petren**, President of Design for All Europe

**Pete Kercher**, Ambassador of Design for All Europe

**Jean-François Serre**, Ministry for Economy, Industry and Employment, DG CIS, Head of Unit “Design and creation”

**Juan Carlos Campillo**, Ministry for Economy, Industry and Employment - DG CIS - Project manager “Design and creation” Unit

**Martin Charter**, Director of The Centre for Sustainable Design at University for the Creative Arts (UCA)

**Anne-Marie Sargueil**, President of the Institut Français du Design

**Francesc Aragall i Clavé**, International expert on accessibility and Design for all, President of the Design for all Foundation, General Manager of ProAsolutions

**Johan Valcke**, Director of Design Flanders

**Jørgen Rosted**, Director of FORA - The Danish Enterprise and Construction Authority's Division for Research and Analysis

**Emily Campbell**, Director of Design at the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA)

**Mil Vukovic**, Government Relations Manager, Design Council UK

**Anna Thame**, Marketing Director of Design Council UK

**Jan R. Stavik**, Managing director of BEDA – Bureau of European Design Association

**Andrej Kupetz**, Managing director and technical manager of the German Design Council (Frankfurt am Main)

**Jean Schneider**, Project Manager at the French Agency for the Promotion of Industrial Creation

**Andrew McMeekin**, Researcher at Sustainable Consumption Institute (SCI), University of Manchester

## ***ANNEX 2: The responsible design label: initial ideas of the Commission services (DG Enterprise and Industry) [as of 21st December 2009]***

A *Responsible Design Label* would be a voluntary label to be implemented by national and regional design support organisations. In the case of products, it could e.g. make use of a swing tag (a label attached to the product with a piece of string) with the joint European logo of “Responsible Design” on the one side, the logo of the implementing organisation on the other, e.g. a national Design Council.

### *Specific objectives*

- To incentivise European companies to develop new “responsibly innovative” products and services;
- To stimulate demand and market uptake of “responsibly innovative” products and services;
- To lessen the environmental impact of consumption and to make quality design available and safe to use for everyone;
- To promote European design and the European brand, within Europe and externally.

### *Organisation*

The criteria for what constitutes “responsible design” should be developed by a European level expert group working in consultation with potential implementing organisations and the Commission. These criteria would cover aspects of environmental performance (quality, sourcing, production mode, etc.), accessibility (cf. design for all/universal design) and safety. They should build on the eco-design label and on criteria developed by e.g. Design for All Europe, by the UK Design Council on “Good Design”, by the Ile de France region on “Responsible Innovation” and criteria for awards such as Danish INDEX: Design to improve life.

National and regional design and innovation support organisations would be the implementing organisations by allowing companies and organisations within their geographical area to use the label, and by controlling that the criteria are adhered to by the organisations using the label. Self-attribution could even be envisaged, i.e. a process by which companies and organisations themselves assess to which of their products and services the label could be attached, in which case no “ex-ante” assessment is needed by the implementing organisations.

The reputation and success of the label would depend on the respect of the responsible design criteria by companies and by the implementing organisations. Adherence to the rules would be ensured by peer pressure and through an open website where complaints about the misuse of the label could be posted.

The initiative and use of the label should be voluntary, and control at a European level should be minimal or non-existent. The Responsible Design Initiative could be supervised by a permanent working group set up by the Commission. An Advisory Board (e.g. the continuation of the initial expert group) should meet at regular intervals to ensure that the criteria remain relevant and up-to-date.

The label could be funded as a pilot action under the EIP. The initiative would be evaluated after three years of operation.

## ***ANNEX 3: Checklist for the interviews***

- 1.** *What is design for you (/for your organisation)?*
- 2.** *What is good/responsible/sustainable/fair/for all design? / Which criteria do you/would you use to define it?*
- 3.** *What would you think of a label that claims values of "responsibility" (ie social responsibility for example)?*
- 4.** *How do you check/measure/audit the quality of the design processes to make sure they are socially responsible? How costly is it (what would be the various costs incurred for the implementing organisation)?*
- 5.** *Is a European design label a "good idea"? To what extent would your organisation be supportive of a European label? What should it be?*  
(eg: would your organisation support the following concept: "National and regional design and innovation support organisations would be the implementing organisations by allowing companies and organisations within their geographical area to use the label, and by controlling that the criteria are adhered to by the organisations using the label. Self-attribution could even be envisaged, i.e. a process by which companies and organisations themselves assess to which of their products and services the label could be attached, in which case no "ex-ante" assessment is needed by the implementing organisations.")
- 6.** *What are the key implementation problems foreseen?*