



SEE DESIGN
Sharing Experience
on Design Support
for SMEs

SEEdesign Bulletin

Sharing experience on design support

Issue 6 December 2007

EDITORIAL

Gavin Cawood and Gisele Raulik

RESEARCH

Evaluating the impact of design support – final report
Professor Bruce Tether

INTERVIEW

Adrienne Viljoen - SABS Design Institute (South Africa)
Dr Zbynek Vokrouhlicky - Design Centre of Czech Rep. (Czech Republic)

DESIGN SUPPORT IN PRACTICE

Innovation by Design (Ireland)
Design 2005 (Finland)

SEEDESIGN REPORT

The Partners' report
SEEdesign achievements (2005-07)
Ten recommendations for design organisations
Ten recommendations for government and policy makers
SEEdesign Network (2005-07) - Europe and Worldwide

NEWS



EDITORIAL

This is the last of the series of six Bulletins that started in 2005 when the SEEdesign partnership was approved to receive funds from the European Union within the INTERREG IIC Programme. The original intention was simply to have a communication tool for the project's activities, but we soon realised that this was an opportunity for something more ambitious. As a key target for the programme, and with contributions from the network partners, it was possible to expand the Bulletin into the first publication entirely dedicated to design policy, promotion and support.

During the three years of the SEEdesign network we have identified more than 70 practices supporting and/or promoting design as well as an extensive range of research in this field. In addition to the Bulletin, this information has been shared via the SEEdesign Library and other sections of the project website in the form of case studies, podcasts, meeting transcriptions and presentation handouts; visit www.seedesign.org to find more information.

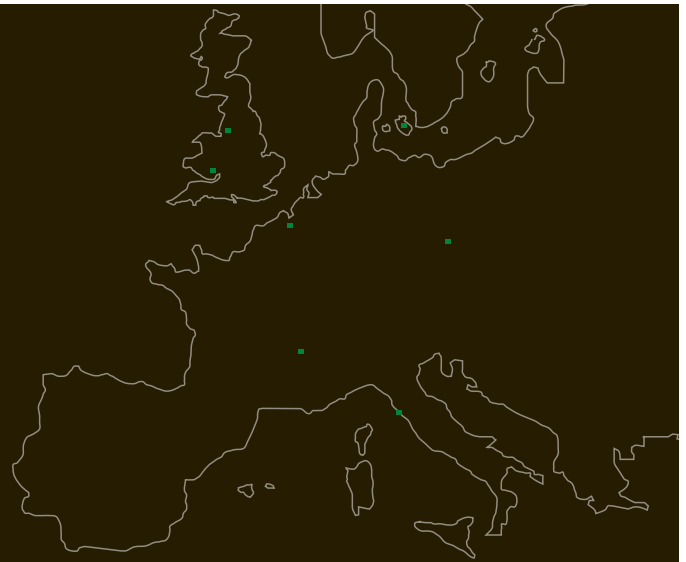
This issue of the SEEdesign Bulletin aims to present some of the achievements of the project and includes maps to show the extent which the network has developed. Marking the end of the programme, a special article brings statements from the SEEdesign partners which outline their learning during the project, and offers some advice for the improvement of design programmes and policies in this field. The research article for this issue is by Professor Bruce Tether, who presents his conclusions on the development of a tool for the evaluation of the impact of design support in companies. The interview section presents two experienced professionals from the field of design promotion: Dr Zbynek Vokrouhlicky from the Czech Republic and Adrienne Viljoen from South Africa. The Design Support in Practice Section looks at the Innovation by Design Programme from Ireland and the Design 2005 Programme from Finland.

The objective of the INTERREG IIC Programme, and thus SEEdesign, was to identify practices that could be shared and transferred from one partner to another. In our case this was to improve the delivery of design programmes as a route to support the economic development of each region.

In addition to these core objectives a global network of design organisations, academics and policy makers have found SEEdesign a rich source of information and inspiration. Our office continues to receive enquiries and messages of support from around the world as interest grows in finding routes to economic advantage through design.

The SEEdesign Network officially comes to an end on 31 December 2007. Until then more content will be added to our web-based resources, which will remain available for some time to come. More importantly the relationships between the partners and, with wider contacts, will continue to develop into initiatives designed to further understand the significant role the support and promotion of design can play in the economic development of regions and nations.

Gavin Cawood and Gisele Raulik
Design Wales



THE SEE DESIGN PARTNERSHIP

The SEEdesign Bulletin is produced by Design Wales as part of the activities of SEEdesign – a project part-financed by the European Union (ERDF) within the INTERREG IIC Programme.

SEEdesign provides a unique opportunity for seven partners from around Europe to share their experiences of delivering design support programmes. As a consequence of developing constructive working relationships over the three years of the programme, the outcome will be the realisation of best practice models and the development of tools to measure the effectiveness of current and future projects.

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National Centre for Product Design
& Development Research**
Cardiff, Wales, UK
www.designwales.org.uk
www.pdr-online.co.uk



Design Flanders
Brussels, Belgium
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The Design Centre of the Czech Republic
Prague, Czech Republic
www.designcentrum.cz



Design Centre Rhone-Alps
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www.centredudesign.fr

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www.seedesign.org

Evaluating the impact of design support – final report

Professor Bruce Tether



An element of the SEEdesign project has been the development of evaluation tools that are intended to help design support agencies with understanding, evaluating and promoting the effectiveness of their design support programmes.

The nature, extent and, to some degree, the purpose of design support varies considerably across Europe, and can change dramatically over time. For example, in the UK, Design Wales provides much more support than is found in the English regions. Meanwhile, in France much greater effort is made to promote and support design in the Rhone-Alps region than most of France's regions. In Denmark the nature of public support for design has changed in recent years, with the emphasis shifting from design support to design promotion. In the Czech Republic the government has recently withdrawn support for the Czech Design Centre. Similarly in Sweden, government support for the Swedish Industrial Design Foundation has come under intense scrutiny. This variation and instability reflects different perceptions concerning the role of the state in promoting and supporting design. Free market liberals argue that design should be treated as any other investments in intangibles made by the firm, such as advertising or R&D. Firms should make their decisions about whether to invest in design, just as they decide to invest in advertising or R&D, whilst it is up to designers and design agencies to promote their services to potential clients. Opponents argue that design, like R&D, is likely to suffer from "market failure", particularly due to asymmetric information, and consequently firms are likely to under-invest in design. Others argue that design should be supported because it plays an important role in cultural expression. This is not the place to review these complex arguments, but we raise them to set the context for the development of the evaluation tools. If design support agencies can demonstrate they are doing "a good job" they are more likely to retain support than if they cannot demonstrate this. Moreover, the development of evaluation tools also potentially helps the agencies improve their services, both by learning from each other and by analysing the data collected on their own performance.

Evaluating design support

Evaluating the impact of design, and design support, is difficult, however. Design is likely to be a complementary asset, which means that it tends to be most effective when used in combination with other, complementary activities, such as marketing. This means that firms may fail to realise the benefits of investing in design because they do not find the right balance between design and marketing. Evaluating design support is even more difficult, as the design support agency is not ultimately responsible for either the design services provided to the firm, or for the way in which the firm chooses to utilise design. Yet the design support agency may be considered to have provided an inadequate service if expectations are not realised. Evaluating design support is also difficult because of the need to gather information

that is not normally collected, and the collection of this information may be an awkward intrusion into the relationship between the design support agency and its client firms, be these providers or users of design services.

Developing the four questionnaires

For this project, we developed four short questionnaires, each two pages long. The first was administered to firms about to receive design support. The second was completed by staff at the design support agencies and pertains to the company about to receive support. The third will be administered to the companies that received design support some years after the end of the project for which they received support; this survey has yet to be administered. The fourth questionnaire was developed to provide retrospective evidence on firms that have received design support in the past. The questionnaires ask about both objective "facts" (such as information on firm size, age, exports, the extent of the firm's current investment in design, and so on) and subjective "opinions", such as the (expected) impact of design on the firm, the relative importance of design vis-à-vis other activities, and so on. During the life of the SEEdesign project the partners administered Questionnaires 1 and 2, as well as the retrospective survey of their past clients (Questionnaire 4). Questionnaire 3 will be administered in due course to those who have received design support in recent years. In what follows, we will report some of the findings from the questionnaires returned by firms about to receive design support (Questionnaire 1) and by those that received design support in the past (Questionnaire 4).

Initial results

Reviewing some of the findings of the responses to Questionnaire 1 (administered to firms about to receive design support) it is notable that not all of the firms that were about to receive design support were new to investing in design. Indeed, whilst half the firms seeking design support did not use design systematically or had just started to think about using design, a third already considered design as a "natural management tool for the company". The remainder currently used design just for styling or as a "last finish", or as an integrating – but not a controlling – element in the decision making of the firm. This finding may be surprising, as it had been anticipated that design support would be oriented to "design novices" rather than to those already active in design. Moreover, it is easier to justify providing publicly-funded support targeted at "design novices". Another similar finding is that a significant proportion of firms about to receive design support already had internal design activities, although the majority did not. Further analysis showed that this differed between the partners – some were much more oriented to "design novices" than others. These differences in the types of firms served are likely to be reflected in differences in the type of services provided.

Managing expectations

A related aspect of providing design support is managing expectations. Firms already using design should have a better idea of what design (and design support) can do for them than those turning to design for the first time. Overall, the great majority of the firms about to receive design support expected design to have a significant impact on their image (with clients), but a majority also expected investments in design to lead to increased turnover, profits and competitiveness. Meanwhile, relatively few firms expected that investing in design would have a major impact on their productivity or efficiency, or that it would lead directly to increased employment or have environmental benefits. An issue here is whether some firms, especially those that are new to design, expect too much from investing in design, i.e. perceiving that design is some sort of “magic bullet”. This raises the issue of how design support agencies can manage the firm’s expectations, whilst drawing on their judgement and experience from dealing with similar firms.

Most firms did not perceive design to be the most important factor in determining their competitiveness, and therefore implicitly recognised that investing in design alone is unlikely provide this “magic bullet”. Overall, customer service tended to be regarded as most important to their competitiveness, followed by sales and marketing, financial management and operational management. Overall, design was perceived to be of lesser importance, but had a similar significance to R&D: it was perceived as more important than internal communications or human resource management. The finding that design is of similar important to R&D is particularly notable, as policy makers tend to be more favourable to providing incentives for firms to invest in R&D than they are to provide incentives for investment in design.

In due course these firms will be surveyed again and asked about the impact of design and design support on their activities. This second survey, when married up with the pre-design support survey and the ex ante opinions of the design support agencies’ staff, should facilitate a detailed mapping of the expected and actual impact of design and design support on firms.

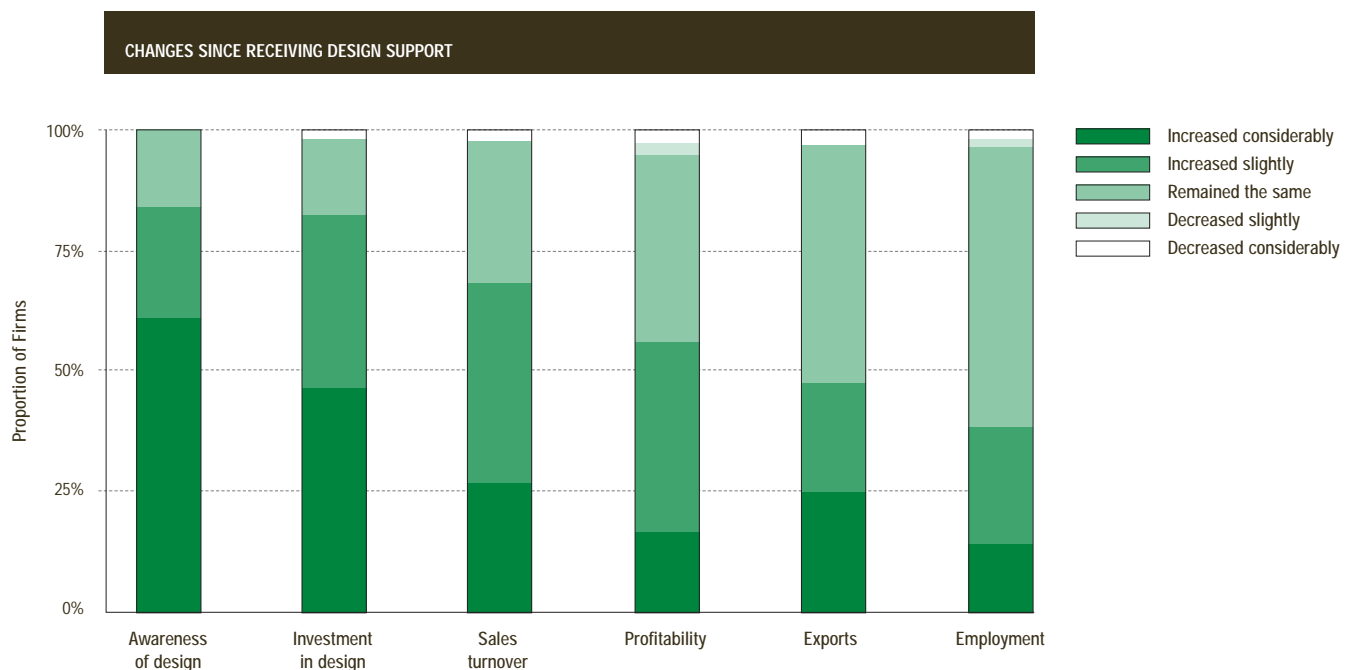


Figure 1 shows the how these firms had changed since receiving design support. It is, of course, possible that some of these changes would have occurred without the receipt of design support, but overall the patterns are encouraging.

Impact of design support

Aside from firms about to receive design support, an adequate number of questionnaire responses were gathered from firms that received design support in the past. These were asked to look back on the impact that design and design support had had on their activities.

Amongst these firms, 85 per cent indicated that their awareness of design had increased, whilst 80 per cent had also increased their investment in design. Nearly 60 per cent had increased their sales turnover, and nearly as many had increased their profitability, whilst nearly half had increased their exports. Meanwhile, 40 per cent had increased their employment. These positive outcomes are unlikely to be wholly due to investing in design, but it is likely that design has played a part in these successful outcomes.

Evaluating the response

Overall, our perception is that the questionnaires developed to evaluate design support have worked well. Questionnaires 1 and 4 were typically completed with little missing information. The main challenge appears to be gathering the required information systematically, so that as many firms as possible are included.

Systematic data collection has two benefits. First, it ensures the pattern of response is representative; if, by contrast, responses are gather from only a small proportion of the firms these may not be representative and provide a distorted view of the firms that received design support. Second, a large number of responses allows the data to be “cut” in a variety of ways, which can reveal interesting patterns and differences; for example, whether there are differences in the impact of design and design support between firms looking to invest in design for the first time and those that have had prior commitments to design.

IMPACT OF DESIGN INVESTMENTS ON THE FIRM

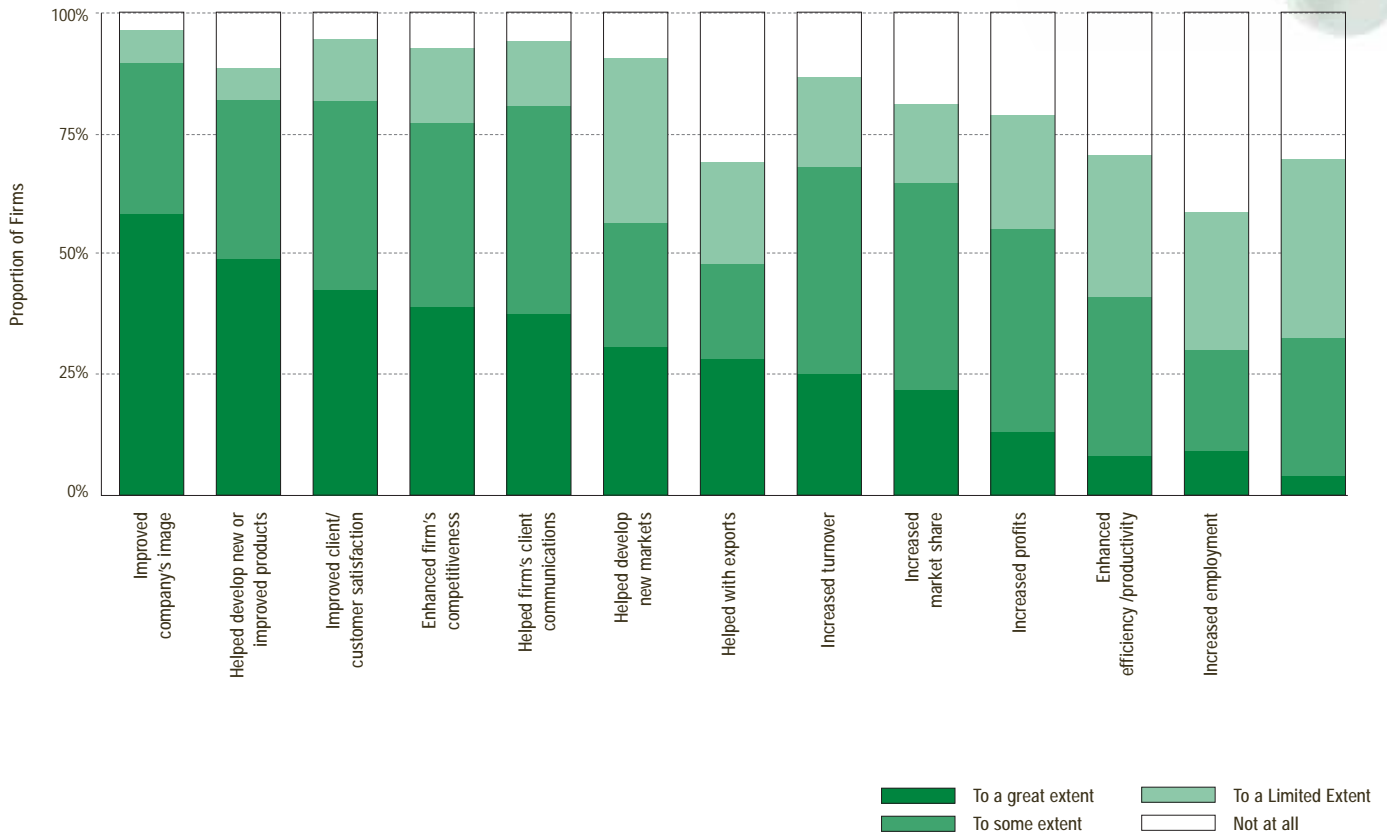


Figure 2 shows the perceived impact of investing in design amongst these firms. This shows a variety of positive impacts, suggesting that overall investing in design has been highly beneficial to these firms.

The data gathered by the partners was sufficient for some comparative analyses, and revealed some interesting findings. For example, the data shows that as well as helping firms to take up design for the first time, design support agencies help firms in at least two other ways. First, they help firms make transitions between design disciplines (for example, helping those active in communications and branding design to engage in product or service design for the first time). Second, data also shows that design support agencies can help firms make the transition from sourcing design internally, through employing their own designers, to sourcing design from external design consultants.

We conclude that this exercise has been successful in providing the tools that should enable the design support agencies to understand, evaluate and manage their own programmes, make comparisons with programmes offered by other design support agencies, and to provide evidence on the impact of design and design support to external stakeholders such as policymakers and funding bodies. ■

Bruce Tether is Professor of Design and Innovation at Tanaka Business School, Imperial College London, and Research Director of Design London, a new initiative established to bring together Imperial's business and engineering schools with work on design at the Royal College of Art. Bruce is interested in design innovation, and how design methods or design thinking can be integrated with engineering and business approaches to innovation. Prior to joining Imperial at the beginning of October this year, Bruce was at the University of Manchester for ten years, where his research focused primarily on innovation in services and distributed processes of innovation in which several organisations cooperate to achieve innovations.

SEEdesign Partners' Report



The SEEdesign partners in Prague, October 2007 from left to right: Gavin Cawood, Professor Bruce Tether, Dr Zbynek Vokrouhlicky, Charlotte Andersen, Ingrid Vandenhoudt, Susie Ruff, Irene Burroni, Frances Haynes, Ilaria Bedeschi, Gisele Raulik Murphy, Charlotte Nicolaisen, Maguy Gabillard

In 2004 seven design organisations from the EU came together and agreed to work towards one objective: to improve the design support for European SMEs. This was aligned with the aim of the INTERREG IIIC Programme to improve effectiveness of regional development strategies and instruments through large-scale exchange of experience across all EU and neighbouring countries.

Three years later, at the end of the project, the SEEdesign partners are using this last issue of the SEEdesign Bulletin to report on the impact of the programme in their regions. Each explains how the project has benefited their organisation, region and country on different levels. In spite of its short lifespan, the partners show that so far the main impact of SEEdesign has been in incremental improvements to local service delivery. However, an equally important result for the long term is the knowledge that has been generated and shared by this diverse group. Already, a list of recommendations and suggestions from the SEEdesign partners has been produced on the effective delivery of design programmes targeted at SMEs, and on relevant policy issues and government strategies for design. In addition, two maps show how the SEEdesign programme overcame the boundaries of its own network and reached design practitioners and researchers around the world.

As well as having achieved all the targets set at the start of the project, extra activities were incorporated during the three years, such as podcasts and training workshops. These enhanced the project's promotional activities and helped to spread the information. Another invaluable gain was the interaction with representatives from partner countries and the experience of pan-European cooperation. Although SEEdesign was dependent on the INTERREG IIIC Programme, new means of co-operation have been created and professional networks improved. The SEEdesign partnership has built a strong foundation for future co-operation and ensures that partners will continue to benefit from the experience.

Gisele Raulik Murphy, SEEdesign coordinator, Design Wales, UK

Being involved in SEEdesign has been invaluable for Design Wales, on both an operational and strategic level. Sharing experiences with practitioners from across Europe has allowed us to reflect on and improve the support service we currently provide to Welsh SMEs. At a strategic level, the insight gained from working with both the SEEdesign partners and the wider network of global contacts during the project has provided a platform of authority and knowledge that can inform regional policy on the use of design in supporting economic development.

Gavin Cawood, Design Wales, UK

Supporting design in SMEs is not easy. Finding partners, i.e. practitioners, in design from all over Europe has meant a lot to Design Flanders; it's opened up our perspectives on implementing design management in businesses. Exchanging experiences, information, speakers, and so on in the SEEdesign project has boosted our own activities in this field. The meetings and EWDS workshops revealed new and innovative ways to reach SMEs and designers, and the subjects dealt with were always groundbreaking. The SEEdesign project provided the basis for our own 'Belgian Design Forum', with topics such as experience design, service design and promoting design management practices as strategic tools.

Ingrid Vandenhoudt, Design Flanders, Belgium

The Design Centre of the Czech Republic has always had good, rich bilateral relations with similar organisations all over the world. However, for the first time we have been included in a group of several Western European design organisations who have significant experience of design programmes. Cooperation with them within SEEdesign has given us new sources of information and experience, new methods of working with SMEs, and new know-how. SEEdesign helped us to better understand the

needs and requirements of SMEs and therefore enabled us to help them more in the Czech Republic. Most importantly, from our point of view, were the EWDS workshops organised by our partners.

Dr Zbynek Vokrouhlicky, Design Centre of the Czech Republic, Czech Republic

The SEEdesign project has been an excellent opportunity to forge close contact with design centres from other regions and countries and to learn from each other. A great deal of interesting information has been shared, and we have been able to use much of it in our daily work. In supporting SMEs in using design it is important to know how similar programmes work. Very often we were helped by our partners' experience when setting up a new project or a finding new ways of doing things. Information and case studies on the use of design in SMEs in other countries was invaluable for benchmarking, and this has been an important subject in SEEdesign. Some of the many highlights for us have been: learning about Ecodesign Centre Wales; workshops on service design; the Design Flanders films; and the Belgian Design Club. We have only one regret, which is that the evaluation of the impact of the design support component did not meet our expectations. This was because the activities of the SEEdesign partners were too diverse to draw a direct comparison of the effect on companies, so an individual approach was necessary. Overall, the SEEdesign project has been very instructive for us, and we hope it will be possible to work together with the partners on future projects.

Charlotte Nicolaisen, Design Centre Rhone-Alps, France

SEEdesign experience has been fundamental for CSM. As a centre providing public services to Tuscan SMEs, CSM has a structure and mission that differs from European design centres in the way it approaches issues such as design and innovation. During the past three years it has been important to understand other strategies that can

be adopted in our region to support SMEs in their use of design and innovation. This enables us to be more decisive in regional policy making and to advise public institutions on the role of design and innovation in local economic development. Meetings with partners, invited organisations and SMEs have provided ideal opportunities for learning, understanding and comparing similar problems in different territories.

Irene Burrioni, CSM-Centro Sperimentale del Mobile e dell'Arredamento, Italy

The Danish Design Centre has been really inspired by participating in the SEEdesign process and network. At the overall level the information on models and output of design promotion supplied by different EU-countries has been very useful in our dialogue with the national policy makers who support design. At the operational level we have learnt a great deal about how design promotion programmes can be planned and what others' experiences are. Last, but not least, we have gained access to new design trends and disciplines, such as service design and eco-design, that have inspired us to create new design promotion initiatives in Denmark.

Susie Ruff, Danish Design Centre, Denmark

The SEEdesign project has been invaluable in shedding light on the different ways design is supported in a variety of European countries. The partners have clearly benefited by sharing experiences, and also from the initiatives to develop new areas of design support, most notably service design. The project also allowed the development of evaluation tools which are effective in generating insight for both internal management and external stakeholders.

**Professor Bruce Tether, Imperial College
(formerly at Manchester Business School), UK ■**

SEEdesign achievements (2005-07)

- Six SEEdesign Bulletins.
- One International Workshop on Design Support.
- Five European Workshops on Design Support.
- Six SME focussed seminars.
- Three podcasts - from two of the workshops.
- Four skills workshops for the partners.
- Thirty case studies in the SEEdesign Library of Good Practices.
- Fifty-six organisations registered to the SEEdesign Network.
- Sixty-seven practices identified and promoted by the programme.
- Two hundred downloads per month of content from www.seedesign.org.
- An average of 1,500 visits per month to www.seedesign.org.
- Support for new design initiatives emerging around Europe.
- The creation and strengthening of a network for design support in Europe.
- The creation and distribution of the only publication dedicated to support programmes and policies for design.
- The development of a methodology for analysis of the impact of design programmes on economic development.
- The improvement of existing design support programmes in Europe.
- The provision of an online information resource on support, promotion and policies for design.
- The identification and promotion of relevant research from other European-funded design initiatives.
- The collation of material for use in lobbying for regional and national design policies.
- Direct participation and support for local companies and other design organisations at project events. ■

In drawing conclusions from the work of the network during the last three years, the partners came together to discuss recommendations for design support organisations and policy makers for the future.

Ten recommendations for government and policy makers

To ensure that design organisations can play their part in delivering regional policy objectives, the partners recommend that government/policy makers should:





- Provide clear direction and objectives for design programmes to ensure that they are in line with local and national agendas so they participate with and contribute to economic development and other policies (e.g. innovation, social development).
- Coordinate the various stakeholders in education, industry and government involved in design activities so they work towards common objectives.
- Consider comprehensive policies that balance support for the use of design by SMEs and the promotion of design to a wider audience.
- Integrate design into innovation policies as the element that will transform innovative ideas into competitive products for the market.
- Stimulate design education on various levels, from primary school to postgraduate courses, and ensure that education is focused on the demands and needs of the local economy.
- Act as a role model for the use of design through actions (e.g. establish design standards for public procurement).
- Exploit, integrate and stimulate creative thinking in government departments and social programmes.
- Recognise and reward the use of design by industry, service and public sectors through award, certification or incentive schemes.
- Encourage objective evaluation of the impact of design in a range of linked policy areas, such as economic development, culture and innovation.
- Ensure consistency of funding for design programmes so that they operate effectively and financial incentives for the small-business sector in order to encourage the use of design. ■

Ten recommendations for design organisations

To be effective in delivering design programmes targeted to SMEs, the partners recommend that design organisations should:

- Build a team of experienced professionals, with high level of analytical and strategic skills, in order to communicate with SMEs and provide a level of assistance that will make a positive impact on their business.
- Establish clear objectives in both the short and long term that "fit" with regional needs and policies so as to provide a relevant contribution to economic development.
- Combine initiatives on design promotion with programmes that provide direct support for local SMEs in order to make both more effective.
- Communicate appropriately and consistently with the general public and companies in all economic sectors so as to raise awareness of the benefits of design, and with the government and policy makers in order to establish strong rapport and commitment.
- Endeavour to understand the needs of local industry in order to provide appropriate services.
- Provide direct links between companies and research bodies so that companies have access to state-of-the-art information and can become more innovative.
- Establish active networks at regional and national levels with other organisations working on innovation and business support to ensure a more efficient support system for companies.
- Provide training for design professionals on forthcoming issues to ensure that companies have local access to high-quality, well-informed design consultancies.
- Carry out research to gather economic data and indicators that justify investment in design.
- Strive for financial stability, as this is crucial to building both a team and a credible programme. ■



-  Seedesign Partners
-  Bulletin recipients
-  Network Members
-  EWDS & IWDS presenters
-  Case Studies from



Europe
SEEdesign network (2005-07)
 Worldwide



Adrienne Viljoen

The Design Institute was created in 1969 as part of the South African Bureau of Standards. In this conversation Adrienne Viljoen, Director of the Institute since 1995, shares her opinions about design in South Africa, and the challenges and the opportunities of promoting design in this country.



Adrienne, the publication 30 Years of South African Design Excellence tells the Design Institute's history and reflects on mistakes and successes along the way. One of the points raised is the fact that the Design Institute was created according to a foreign model and didn't take local circumstances into account.

Yes, the institute was created after a sequence of events, including a convention held in 1965 that discussed the importance of industrial design. There were a few visionaries in South Africa who realised the importance of creating an institute. They used the example of the British Design Council and employed mainly British citizens to implement the project. It resulted in a British and "first world" view of design, not appreciating that in South Africa there were other needs and priorities. It just contributed to the idea that design was elitist. In 1990 there was a thorough review of the institute and this problem was addressed.

The Design Institute is part of the Bureau of Standards (SABS), which is the national standards generating body and a member of ISO. This is quite a unique cooperation.

When it started in the late 1960s the then Director General of the SABS was one of the visionaries who drove the creation of the Design Institute. There was no way to get adequate private funds for the initiative so he took it under the umbrella of SABS. This was a temporary solution. At this moment South Africa really needs a strong promotional body. Having said that, this association with SABS does benefit the Design Institute. Design is definitely linked with standards – a designer always works within constraints, and to market a product has to comply with standards and regulations. The association gives reassurance of quality. Moreover, being part of a bigger body immediately gave an identity to the Design Institute and our projects and entry into many fields. We also benefit from the access to experts in other sectors for our awards scheme – judging panels, for example.

How is the Design Institute funded?

It is government funded. It's a small budget so we use networks to structure our projects. We have a very strong network with design schools, professional design associations and industry. Some of the technology universities are partners for conferences so we use their facilities and speakers; judges and others are voluntary. We also have very close links with the Institute of Intellectual Property Law in SA. It is an extremely important relationship because we deal with new product development. As a joint project, we have just published the fourth update of a guide to intellectual property in South Africa.

Who establishes the direction for the Design Institute's activities?

Up to now it's been internal. I say that with regret because we really need to be an acknowledged part of the SA National System of Innovation. We rely a lot on our judging panels and the experts we liaise with. We work according to a nine-year strategic plan divided into segments of three years. We have annual review sessions to assess progress and, if needed, to adjust to changing circumstances.

What are the institute's main activities?

We have four streams: industry, education, awards, and Design for Development.

Industry is very focused on new product development. We facilitate access to places where people can get technical assistance and access to intellectual property advice.

In education we endeavour to nurture and develop design leadership in South Africa. We were also the founders of the DEFSA – Design Education Forum of Southern Africa. For 15 to 20 years we really played a major role in that, providing financial help and organising the annual conference.

Awards, exhibitions and publications are intended to market South Africa as an innovative, industrialised country. The South African Design Excellence Award is our major award scheme for products already on the market and for international trade. We also exhibit annually with a major tradeshow, ExportAfrica.

The Design for Development initiative highlights the important role design can play in the sustainable economic development of South Africa. Two important events of this stream were the Interdesign Workshops for sustainable rural transport and the use of water. We are now linked to Nepad, the New Partnership of African Development, a pan-African movement.

We also have an important information section (our website and publications), and a liaison section focusing on the relationship with government, media and international institutes, which is extremely important for South Africa. Different countries get different benefits from association with international bodies like ICSID (International Council of Societies of Industrial Design). For us the result is the elevated status that our projects gain, becoming internationally recognised and acknowledged. Moreover, we learn about new developments, network with leading people in the industry and hear their opinions. All this knowledge can be transferred directly to local projects.

In the beginning of the interview you mentioned the problem with an elitist idea of design.

Unfortunately, there is a perception of design as elitist, something accessible only by affluent South Africans who can afford quality domestic products. This is changing now; there's a pride that's been developed in South Africa – and, I think, in other emerging economies – that we can do it ourselves.

Another negative is the government's view. They seem to understand science, technology and innovation, but not the critical value of design. Having said that, South Africa has always been very good in particular niche areas of design – engineering design and, in particular, mining engineering. The reason is obvious: South Africa has the deepest mines in the world and this required advanced technology; expertise could not be brought in from elsewhere so it had to be developed here. Now South Africa is trading technologies developed in this field. Some related research has also addressed typical problems for mines: for example, the problem of diamond theft and miners hiding diamonds on their bodies. They had to be screened, and a low-dosage x-ray was developed. This

technology is now being transferred into medical use – it is highly appropriate for a trauma patient due to the low dosage. Other important areas where we excel are in the development of primary healthcare products, the development of products for low-cost housing, and security systems.

How does this influence design education in South Africa?

It has a strong effect, particularly on engineering courses. There are only two industrial design schools in South Africa but many graphic and interior design schools. As well as government-run establishments there are independent schools. Some of them are very prominent and are affiliated with international institutions for the validation of degrees. They are popular but also more expensive. A very interesting phenomenon at the moment is the attraction of a lot of students from other African countries to study design here. Affordability is an important factor, as well as the fact that the standard of education is generally quite high in South Africa. South Africans are becoming aware of the responsibility of moulding Africa's thinking. The Design Institute's initiative, Design Achievers, is an important, successful programme in this context. We want to encourage youth leadership. They are not necessarily going to be the top creative design students but rather will have the entrepreneurial and leadership skills to establish design businesses and build the industry.

What are the developments on policy for design in South Africa?

The problem is a lack of cohesion. The Department of Art and Culture has started a policy, which is focused on craft and not on design. The Department of Science and Technology has started a policy and developed a national system of innovation, which does not include design, and the Department of Trade and Industry has started an industrial policy without any mention of design.

How do you see the future of design in South Africa?

I believe that the industry is on the brink of prospering. The tide is turning, so the awareness of what design can do is there – it's just that it's not coordinated. It will need time, but the ingredients are sound, and if we could just get everything and everyone to work together it will happen much faster. What we try and do with Design for Development is show how designers can really benefit the development of the country – that it is not elitist. On a commercial level, our graphic designers and our advertising industry are doing exceptionally well as are the interior designers. Unfortunately, manufacturers still believe they only need engineers and not industrial designers, so we're trying to change that. ■

Dr Zbynek Vokrouhlicky

Dr Zbynek Vokrouhlicky, well known as Dr Vok from the Design Centre of the Czech Republic, has dedicated his entire career to fostering the use of design among Czech companies as well as to promoting Czech design internationally. In this interview he explains how design has been evolving despite the many political scenarios that the Czech Republic has faced over the last century.



Dr Vok, the SEEdesign partners have just visited the Czech Republic. We were impressed with the quality of design shown at the exhibitions, in particular from students. Is design education flourishing in the Czech Republic and what are the strongest disciplines?

The education of design students in the Czech Republic has a long tradition, practically since the last quarter of the 19th century when the School of Applied Arts – today the College of Applied Arts (Vysoká škola uměleckoprůmyslová or VSUP) – was founded. At that time design here was called industrial design, or applied creative arts. Since the opening of this school (and throughout its existence to this day) the tutors were from among the top Czech artists – sculptors, painters, graphic artists, glass-makers. This in itself ensured a high standard of tuition and a good standard of graduates. The VSUP is not the only college educating designers. In the Czech Republic there are also the Czech Technical College (Prague), Technical College (Brno), University of J.E. Purkyně (Ústí nad Labem), T. Bata University (Zlín), West-Bohemian University (Plzeň) and the Textile College (Liberec). All of these teach design according to individual fields at a high professional level. The skills of the graduates are also guaranteed thanks to a wide network of specialised designer vocational schools in the Czech Republic. The best students of these schools pass on to the colleges to acquire further knowledge and practical skills.

Is there a strong link between industry and design courses?

Yes, that is also part of the good tradition of our design schooling, whether

secondary or college. Today, students of design colleges commonly work in industrial companies for some time and only later come back to finish their studies. The advantage of this is that they know the needs of the industry, as well as its technical and technological possibilities, know-how and the like.

What about design jobs? Are companies willing to employ designers or are they more likely to work with external design consultancies?

This is a more complex question. Before the so-called Velvet Revolution in 1989 everything was different: the companies planned their own designs, and most of them had their regular designers as employees. After 1989 this changed: the privatisation of our industry eliminated the planning and most companies also stopped employing designers. This way they no longer had to pay insurance for the designers, their social security and fixed wages, which they used to do even if the designer was not creating anything new for them. Today, a vast majority of companies work with external designers. Only large – mostly foreign – firms employ their own designers. In the beginning this big change meant a lot of problems for designers working freelance: they had to learn to offer their own ideas to the market, they had to learn how to “sell” their designs, and so on. Today, they know how to do it, and that is why those of a high professional level have no problems. Of course, for new graduates of design schools it may take some time to find their way into industrial companies. This not only concerns designers – we have the same problem with many graduates from other fields.

The Czech Republic has a long history of manufacturing and design. How has the decline of manufacturing affected the use of design in the Czech Republic?

This problem mostly concerns small and medium-sized companies. They were also nationalised before 1989, and their privatisation often caused the loss of design in their production. It was largely because the new owners of these companies did not have enough capital to pay designers; often they did not even know what design was or who to turn to when looking for designers. Often they "did" their own design using their own employees, which often meant poor results and products that would not sell. Also, our market was already open and offered many foreign products perfectly designed, which may have been more expensive but still sold better. Today, this problem has also been overcome.

The country has had to adapt to different regimes and economic models. How has design been affected by these changes?

However absurd it may seem, the fact is that design implementation in industry before 1989 had its advantages. As I have said before, at this time of total planning, the design was planned as well. Companies had to apply design to production, and in many there were even so-called "creative committees" that were in charge of assessing the aesthetic quality of the production. The chairmen of these committees were mainly important designers or artists, and they had the right to propose changes to the products if the aesthetic level was not high enough. On a state-wide level there was also a Council of Applied Arts which, as a government advisory body, could assert itself significantly in implementing and using design in industrial production. That is why even during socialism the level of Czechoslovak industrial production was quite high and the products sold worldwide as well, especially glass, porcelain, textiles and clothing. The first years after 1989 caused problems in the world of design. Many producers considered design redundant, regarding it as something that made products more expensive and caused only more trouble. The pressure of foreign competition and the promotional activities of the Design Centre of the Czech Republic (DC CR) gradually resolved these problems. Currently, you cannot find a company here which would underestimate design as a discipline that increases the quality of products and thereby their sales at home and abroad.

The DESIGN programme has been supporting SMEs in the Czech Republic for a long time. According to the presentation we attended, more than 1,000 companies have benefited since 1999. It is an impressive number for a design programme. Can you give a brief introduction to this programme?

This change was aided mainly by the programme DESIGN, introduced by the government as one of the means of developing Czech industry. It was assigned to the Ministry of Industry and Trade, which charged the DC CR, subordinate to the Ministry, with running the programme. In short, companies, especially the small and medium-sized, could ask for financial support for the work of designers because they did not have the means to hire qualified designers. The programme has been in existence since 1999 and through it hundreds of companies received financial donations for designer work every year. Until 2006 the government annually gave the programme 10 million Crowns (one euro was then worth 28–30 CZK). The most important thing is that, thanks to this programme, every year many new, well-designed products appeared; this is shown by the fact that many of them obtained design awards, including the National Prize for Design from the Minister of Industry and Trade.

How many people work on the programme in the Design Centre?

There are only two employees in the DC CR. There are more people on the committees that assess the applications for the programme and the quality of the product designs made in the programme, including the director of the DC CR.

Are there other design support schemes or design organisations in the Czech Republic?

At present no other organisation in the Czech Republic is concerned with design

support. It is important to say that the DC CR not only provides financial support but also holds vocational seminars, conferences and workshops and helps companies with design tenders.

What about the designers? Are they organised in professional associations?

In the Czech Republic there are two professional design organisations: as the Czech Republic consists of Bohemia and Moravia, these are the Association of Moravian Designers and Association of Czech Designers. Both cooperate and are members of the Union of Czech Creative Artists.

How long have you been working on the support and promotion of design?

I am one of the most long-standing workers in the sphere of design. I started working in this profession in 1969 in various state design organisations – at first in the Council of Creative Arts Production, later in the Institute of Industrial Design and, after it was founded, in the DC CR.

During your career, what was the most difficult thing to deal with?

There was a period after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 when my passport was confiscated (I was openly opposed to the invasion), and I could not travel out of the country until 1984, not even to professional design events. Basically, I am an optimistic person and so I got over this period. I was in contact with many designers who came to Czechoslovakia on our invitation, and so I could follow the development of design worldwide.

And what has been your greatest satisfaction?

I have managed to secure the membership of the DC CR to three other important international designer organisations (membership in the ICSID passed automatically on to DC CR as the successor of the Institute of Industrial Design), to ICOGRADA/IFI, and, last but not least, to BEDA. To this I add that I have been a member of the ICSID board and the BEDA board for three election periods. This has allowed me to meet a number of excellent designers from all over the world and understand the problems of design practically worldwide.

In being so active on this international network you have also been an important promoter of Czech design. SEEdesign would like to formally thank you for your work in relation to the network and congratulate you on your dedication to the promotion of design during your career. ■

Innovation by Design

(Centre for Design Innovation, Ireland)

Innovation by Design is a new mentor-led programme based on best practice in Europe and the USA. Developed by the Centre for Design Innovation in Sligo, Ireland, the initial programme involves six SMEs across a range of sectors – software, manufacturing and services – based in the north-west of Ireland. Each company will participate in a tailored programme to help them develop innovative products and services and generate competitive advantage well beyond the end of their involvement in the programme.

The Centre for Design Innovation is staffed by three people and opened in January 2006 after a number of lecturers and academics at the Sligo Institute of Technology identified the need for a design centre to support new product development and innovation in the region. They submitted a funding application to the Applied Research Enhancement programme run by Enterprise Ireland, the success of which enabled the Centre for Design Innovation to be established. This regional vision has since expanded to a national context.

To formulate the programme the Centre hosted an event entitled Meeting of Minds (MOM) to which they invited key design practitioners from the UK, Ireland and the USA with extensive experience of running the type of design programme they wanted to provide. From this workshop they formulated the basis of the methodology which conceptually defined their Innovation by Design programme. This was refined over time and at a smaller follow-up MOM event. The development of the programme was also influenced by some of the user-centred work done by IDEO and Ziba, the D-School in the United States and the work of the UK Design Council, particularly their Immersion Programme.

The team established “ten commandments” to guide the programme and their interaction with the companies. These were:

1. Invest time in the selection process.
2. Speak their language.
3. Don't scare them with too many details.
4. Be explicit about rewards.
5. Establish a diary at the outset.
6. Understand the psychology of a diverse team.
7. Who are the users? What do you know about them?
8. Pick good stories.
9. Have a contingency.
10. Learn from others who have operated similar programmes.

In order to identify the participating companies, the Design Centre talked to a number of government support agencies who worked closely with a large range of SMEs in the north-west of Ireland. These agencies advised on which companies would benefit most and also be willing to commit to such an initiative. The Design Centre also sent out a mailshot to companies containing some facts about design's impact on the bottom line and inviting them to get in touch if they wanted to find out more. This proved to be a very successful mechanism for company self-selection.

An initial shortlist of 200 companies yielded a final group of six companies: an institute of technology; an airport; a precision-moulding company; a crane manufacturer; a software developer; and an agricultural cooperative. Three to six representatives from each organisation participated in the first event, a user-centred design workshop, in June 2007.

Two design associates with extensive experience in design support, industry and research then engage with the companies at various points to facilitate the programme's aims and objectives. These design associates are selected on their reputation and the expertise they can provide. There will also be a network event every three months, including workshops on specific issues such as branding or product

development, and an online forum has been created to manage communications and provide a digital way for the organisations to communicate at any time. Initial feedback has indicated that the non-competitive network within the programme is of unique value.



User-centred design card pack (in action), Ireland West Airport, 2007

Each company's performance will be assessed at the beginning, middle and end of the programme through defined sets of key performance indicators (KPIs). These will provide ongoing evaluation and validation of the programme and help quantify the impact of design innovation.

In the five months following the initial workshop, the companies carried out design research using observational methods. The user-centred design tools were extremely new to these organisations and it took them some time to gain a comfortable understanding of the approach. Most could not resist the temptation to carry out traditional surveys in addition to the design-led research. Design associate involvement (mentoring) proved critical to the success of initial design research visits.

In September 2007 all six organisations convened to present their work to date. They shared tools and techniques and the most interesting insights uncovered from their users. Many have found time and resources the biggest challenges so far, while each has created a public project space within their organisation to share information on their work.

Five of the six are implementing product/service development projects. Brand will play a role in each of the projects, with one project focused exclusively on a re-brand. It is likely that more branding work will be identified following the branding workshop component of the programme.

While the period from June to September 2007 was about user-centred research, the rest of the programme is about turning insights into opportunities, creating briefs and engaging designers in most cases.

From the perspective of the Centre for Design Innovation the summer proved to be a bad time to coordinate activity, and in future the programme will start in September. However, they can already see opportunities developing within the programme that will translate into great Irish case studies and design promotion tools.

The three-year programme has a budget of 1.25 million euros and the cost per company is 1,500 euros for which they will receive five network meetings and five mentoring sessions, including the user-centred workshop at the start of the programme. The real cost will be around 20,000 euros per company. Companies may also get up to an 80 per cent subsidy (maximum of 250,000 euros) to allow them to implement opportunities arising from the programme via funding from another organisation.

The team stresses the importance of explaining from the outset what the programme is about, its objectives, the approach it will encompass, and what will be required from each company. This ensures that each company knows what they are getting involved in so they do not have unrealistic expectations and, consequently, will remain with the programme for its duration. ■

For more information please visit www.designinnovation.ie.

DESIGN 2005

(TEKES, Finland)

The DESIGN 2005 programme, delivered by TEKES, The Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation, was instigated in response to the publication of the Finnish design policy, 'Design 2005!'. This government initiative coordinated a series of actions involving different stakeholders, with one objective: to strengthen the competitiveness of Finnish production with the priority of increasing expertise in design through education and research. The aim was to create a multidisciplinary research programme on design, which would connect research on design to research in other academic disciplines. The programme had one year preparatory phase and ran for 4 years (2002–2005).

DESIGN 2005 was the first programme dedicated to design, recognising its core role in research and development (R&D). Previously, design was supported as a part of other projects, mainly on product development.

Preparation of the programme involved opinion leaders in design in Finland. An important topic for discussion was the scope of design research and themes related to industrial design. A decision was made to focus the TEKES programme on technology and business factors. Preparatory studies showed that design competence was still poorly exploited by Finnish industry. Apart from a few large international companies, national industries - mostly small companies - did not traditionally invest in design research. However the significance of design was clearly more significant to Finnish industry as products became more technology advanced.

Therefore, the programme aimed to develop three main targets: the standard of research on design; the utilisation of design in product development and business strategies; the competence of design firms and strengthening their service operations.

TEKES is a large funding agency, which employs more than 300 people in Finland. As an R&D investor, the agency funds academic research, applied research inside companies and some R&D work in companies. On the 'reactive side', TEKES financially supports about 30 to 50 focused programmes simultaneously. DESIGN 2005 is one of these programmes. It was implemented by a team of 3 people from TEKES and financed by the Ministry of Trade and Industry in Finland.

Applications were accepted from companies, academic and research institutions in Finland. The programmes' brochure states the kind of project that was funded by DESIGN 2005:

"The Programme intended to support research and development that utilizes design expertise and is linked with the development of high-technology products, and to help develop design services and design practices and bring them up to international standards. Improving industrial design will produce benefits that justify its status as a part of corporate strategy. Quantifying and qualifying these benefits is an essential part of the research that the Programme supports. The basis of the Programme is thus to develop the use of design within a company, not simply to increase its use."

Besides the core activity of the programme (the funded participant projects), DESIGN 2005 also promoted biennial seminars and regional events. Attracting several hundred people, these events explained the programme activities. Research results of the programme were presented at 2 events, called ABC (Academics, Business, Consultants) in 2004 and 2005. Communication activities were also an important element of DESIGN 2005 and included a monthly newsletter, a website, and targeted contacts.

The programme organised two fact-finding missions to Japan and USA to encourage international co-operation in recognition of the increasingly international nature of competition for design consultants.

An important aspect of the programme was its emphasis on research into and improvement of processes and knowledge, rather than on the development of isolated products. This resulted from the understanding that changes in processes rather than changes in products will result in better and longer-lasting impacts and benefits. Although this strategic position has a clear objective of achieving a higher-end impact, this position also limits access to the fund. In this scenario, only companies capable of exploiting design at a strategic level became eligible for funding, making the fund almost inaccessible for thousands of smaller businesses, including start-ups, with very limited knowledge of how to use design.

Companies received grants or loans with low interest rates requiring no guarantee. Grants were given where the project involved mainly preparatory work for product development and not direct development work. This took into consideration laws of fair competition for private and public funds. Grants could cover from 25% to 50% of the total costs of the project (typically 35%). Loans varied from 50% to 70% of total project costs.

DESIGN 2005 implemented 73 projects, with approximately 100 participating companies. TEKES invested EUR 10.3 million in funding for enterprise and research projects. A similar amount was invested by participating companies, research institutions and other partner organisations. Moreover, TEKES spent EUR 0.9 million in implementation costs for the programme. Enterprise projects not only supported new product development but also promoted the integration of design competence, usability, design concepts for new products, strategic use of design in business, trend and user surveys and new process development.

DESIGN 2005 was implemented over 4 years - one year of preparation and 3 years of implementation. There then followed an extra year of evaluation. Results of a survey carried out during this evaluation period reveal what the programme achieved: increased awareness of design; development of research services by research institutes; and the enhancement of corporate processes and competence. Some concrete examples of successful achievements were listed from Enterprise projects. The majority of companies developed new products and/or improved existing ones and several successful new procedures were established, in particular in the boat industry.

TEKES programmes boost new topics that will benefit the economy, in this case, by providing financial support that encourages companies to invest in research and development in design. New topics are periodically identified and replace previous ones but this does not mean that TEKES no longer supports design research and development projects as the Agency is now open to applications for funding in this field of activity, as part of its 'reactive' funding service.

One of the emerging issues TEKES is addressing is the development of services, which constitutes a significant trend and an increasing component of the Finnish economy. Another important issue is how to bridge the gap between innovation and the market, to help companies develop their innovative ideas, meet customers demands and get their ideas successfully to market. ■

For more information please visit www.tekes.fi.



DME Award ceremony

The first DME Award ceremony took place at the Red Dot Museum in Essen, Germany, on 22 November 2007. These awards, a key part of the PRO-INNO Europe initiative ADMIRE, were launched in June 2007 with the aim of demonstrating and promoting the commercial benefits of good design management practices to businesses and organisations. Nineteen partners from twelve European countries worked together to establish these awards. They are also researching and gathering state-of-the-art knowledge on design management whilst assessing design management capability across Europe. In formulating the DME agenda they are also challenging regional authorities to stimulate innovation through design, providing advice and support for developing design clusters and design promotion activities.

The launch event in June brought together experts, renowned European brands, business and design communities. Presentations from Philips (NL), Johnson Controls (DE) and Boreal (ES) highlighted their different approaches to managing design in order to remain competitive, innovative and able to predict future markets. Grant Davidson (Vice President Philips Design), Jesus Garcia (CEO Boreal) and Han Hendriks (Vice President Johnson Controls) were joined by Mike Press (Dundee University, Scotland) to discuss his findings on the present and future developments of design management in Europe.

Wally Olins, generally recognised as the world's most experienced practitioner of corporate identity and branding and an internationally acclaimed business speaker, moderated the event and commented on the views presented.

This year the DME Award attracted over 200 entries from twenty countries. The awards were given to six categories of companies and organisations that successfully integrate design in their management, processes and strategy:

- Newcomers (business who recently used design for the first time)
- Microbusiness (<10 employees, annual turnover <€2m)
- Small business (<50 employees, annual turnover <€10m)
- Medium-sized business (<250 employees, annual turnover <€50)
- Large business (>250 employees, annual turnover >€50m)
- National government organisations and non-for-profit organisations.

The Second DME Award ceremony will take place on 13 October 2008 in Cardiff, UK. ■

For details of the winners and more information on the DME Awards and Network go to: www.designmanagementeurope.com



Wally Olins at the launch of the DME Award in Eindhoven, June 2007



Design for Service - a toolkit for businesses

Having identified Service Design as an important new issue for the support of design in companies, SEEdesign developed a range of extra activities including workshops and training sessions on this topic. The material developed during the 3 years of the project has now been compiled into a downloadable publication, which can be used by businesses (in both service and manufacturing sectors) and by providers of design support who want to find out more about this topic. Design Wales and the service design consultancy Engine have created the original publication in English with some SEEdesign partners translating the material for use in their own countries. This initiative demonstrates the programme's commitment to improving the design support provided for companies across Europe by addressing the development of new disciplines such as Service Design. ■

The publication is available for download from the SEEdesign website.

Films on the use of design in SMEs made in UK, Denmark and France

Inspired by the 10 films produced by Design Flanders for the launch of the Belgian Design Forum on the use of design in Belgian companies, SEEdesign partners Design Wales, Danish Design Centre and Design Centre Rhone-Alps have initiated similar projects. Design Wales produced three films about Welsh companies who use design strategically: Melin Tregwynt (woven textiles), Mustang Marine (boats), and DMM Wales (climbing equipment). The DDC's film, Innovation via Design, includes interviews with top Danish companies who describe the part design plays in their success. Design Centre Rhone-Alps' film will focus on the use of design at the French company Groupe SEB. ■

For further information go to: www.designwales.org, www.centredudesign.fr, www.ddc.dk/DESIGNVIDEN/artikler/film_innovationviadesign

Medical design – a new area of investigation for the Design Centre Rhone-Alps

Nearly two years ago, the Design Centre Rhone-Alps, in partnership with an organisation that specialises in the medical and biotechnology sectors, began to investigate the use of design in companies developing medical devices. For over a year they have been visiting around 20 companies to discover how they use design. The results have been disappointing, but not surprising. Very few companies in this sector in the Rhone-Alps region understand the added value of design in the development of new products, even though design should be an issue for them.

At the end of October 2007 the Design Centre co-organised a design exhibition, competition and a conference as a part of a new medical fair – Hospitevent – held for the first time in Lyon. The results were positive: 37 products were shown in the Innovation Gallery exhibition and 23 of these participated in the design competition. The awards were given in four categories: Design and Technological Innovation; Design and Ergonomics; Favourite of the Jury; and Favourite of the Public.

Sixty people – companies, designers and students – attended the conference and heard three speakers: Joseph Mazoyer, director of a design company from Lyon, gave a report on the medical fair, Medica (Germany); Romain de Jonckheere, Design Manager for Invacare International, presented his work for this international company; and Damien Huyghe, ergonomist at Idéna Ergonomie, gave an example of the collaboration between designers and ergonomists in the development of a medical analysis device.



Award for Design and Technological Innovation: Interdesign – Crossject

More events and actions are programmed for 2008 in order to continue informing the medical companies why and how design should be used. ■

SEEdesign partners meet in Prague

The final meeting of the SEEdesign partners was held in Prague on 4 October 2007, hosted by the Design Centre of the Czech Republic. As well as participating in the Sixth Steering Committee meeting and the Fifth European Workshop on Design Support (EWDS) at the Austrian Cultural Forum in Prague, partners attended a student design awards ceremony and a number of inspiring exhibitions during the Designblok festival (www.designblok.cz). At the EWDS, presenters from the Czech Republic, Denmark, Belgium, Poland and Slovakia gave details of national and regional design support and promotion programmes and a Czech company described how the use of design had significantly improved their business. The partners also participated in a workshop as part of the Steering Committee meeting to evaluate what the SEEdesign programme has achieved and how it will impact on future design support programmes and policies. ■

For more information, transcripts of the EWDS are available on www.seedesign.org.

'Export = Design + Marketing' – new collective programme for SMEs in the Rhone-Alps region

Since the beginning of 2007 the Design Centre Rhone-Alps has been preparing a new programme for SMEs called 'Export = Design + Marketing'. It was finally launched on 13 September 2007 with a conference which included presentations from three companies and a design business.



The programme aims to help SMEs start exporting or improve their export rate by combining a design and marketing approach in order to make products better suited to new markets. Twelve companies from different sectors will participate in the programme, which combines four days of collective training and two days of individual coaching. Training will teach companies how to: identify new export markets; work with designers; combine marketing and design for a new international approach; apply eco-design for international markets; identify the right distribution channels; and distribute products via the Internet.

The Design Centre Rhone-Alps will also run a similar project for design businesses. ■

For more information go to: www.centredudesign.fr



SEEdesign Bulletin – feedback

A feedback form was circulated with the last issue of the Bulletin to evaluate reader response and preferences. The first replies received indicate that the Research and Design Support in Practice have been the most useful sections to design organisations, with design policy and design and economic development the most popular topics overall. If you receive the Bulletin by mail we will be sending the feedback form out again to a small sample, as your feedback is still relevant and valuable. The postage is prepaid. ■

The SEEdesign Bulletin is the communication platform of the SEEdesign partnership and is devoted to publishing material – articles, interviews, case studies – related to the practice of design support in different countries.

The opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the SEEdesign partners.

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