

## **DESIRE: Familiarizing SMEs with Design and Ecodesign**

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The project “Desire – The design of the future: materials, shapes, colours and emotions for a successful product” introduces design and ecodesign to small and medium sized companies (SMEs) and hence aims at increasing the competitiveness of the SMEs. Target groups are companies in specific sectors tied to the transborder region of Austria and Italy: carpenters in Carinthia (Austria), manufacturers of knives in Friuli-Venezia-Giulia and manufacturers of glasses in Veneto (Italy). The project pursues a transdisciplinary approach: designers, experts in ecodesign and communication design cooperate closely with SMEs. The project is funded by the EU Interreg IV funding program.

The project lasts two years and consists of an empirical and an implementation phase. Firstly, an analysis of the current stage of the three sectors and the participating companies is conducted. In the next phase a series of workshops about materials, colours, industrial design, ecodesign, and communication design is organized. Participating in these workshops the companies undergo an entire design process and learn about strategies to integrate ecological aspect in the stage of product development. As a result of the series a prototype is developed in close cooperation of design experts and SMEs. A Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) will reveal then the environmental benefits of ecodesign.

At the conference I will present the main findings and results so far with special focus on the activities in the wood-sector in Carinthia. Furthermore, I will also review the transdisciplinary setting of the project and share recommendations for future projects.