

DESIGN-MTS

DESIGN-MTS is a European project which aims at encouraging and enabling European machine tools builders and actors in its supply chain to take a strategic approach to corporate social responsibility.

Corporate social responsibility: a 21st century essential

In the midst of globalization in the late 1980s, many manufacturers have diversified their suppliers to gain a competitive advantage and reduce their costs through global sourcing. Although this process has added considerable value to the business of companies, it also added complexity to the supply relations and has raised questions on the social and environmental sustainability of global supply chains.

Nowadays, manufacturers pay more attention to the environmental and social performance of their business, not only to address societal concerns but also to boost the efficiency and competitiveness of their business. In that spirit, many manufacturers have developed and implemented codes of conduct ensuring that they fully match minimum established international standards in their supply chain practices. For instance in the automotive and aerospace sectors, two major machine-tool-user sectors, producers increasingly try to integrate corporate social responsibility principles into their supply chain management. They strongly commit to ensure that their business and production practices are in line with international standards set by several guidelines, including ISO 26000, UN Global Compact and OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

DESIGN-MTS aims to create a multi-stakeholder platform enabling effective dialogue between machine tool builders, suppliers and customers on the issue of corporate social responsibility.

The European machine tool industry is already renowned for delivering products and manufacturing solutions that offer high social and environmental performance. To maintain this momentum and, ultimately, to better meet customer demands, it is continuously making further improvements. CECIMO is convinced that the machine tool industry and its value chain would benefit from developing a strategic and integrated approach to sustainability and corporate social responsibility. An effective and early dialogue between actors in the value chain

on CSR requirements would allow a mutual understanding of such requirements and a more effective cooperation.

DESIGN-MTS: a visionary initiative for the European machine tool industry

To foster this dialogue, CECIMO developed with a consortium of academic and industry partners the DESIGN-MTS (Defining Social Responsibility Interventions for Grounded Networking in Machine Tools Sector) project. DESIGN-MTS focuses on four key areas: employability and skills, demographic change and active aging, workplace challenges and environmental issues. The objective is to create a multi-stakeholder platform that will enable the development of effective dialogue channels between machine tool builders, suppliers and customers on the issues of sustainability and corporate social responsibility. It is a voluntary and flexible platform which is tailored to the reality and specific needs of the sector.

DESIGN-MTS will serve as a communication platform pooling information about sustainability and CSR practices along the machine tool industry's value chain. An important function of the multi-stakeholder platform will be to provide valuable information to SMEs who want to benefit from best practices that meet higher social and environmental performance criteria. Integrating these practices can ultimately help SMEs expand their business to global customers which have demanding requirements in their supply chain practices. Communications made through this platform will also reach customers and stakeholders beyond European borders, thus contributing to the promotion of European standards and practices worldwide.



The project was launched in July 2013 and is partly funded by the European Commission. It brings together the University of Macerata (project coordinator), CECIMO, CSR-Europe, the University of Nottingham, the Central European Initiative, and the Economic and Social Research Institute in Italy.

Preliminary results

Over the initial phases of the project, partners have been working on producing two comprehensive reports. The first report, 'Existing situation analysis', gives an overview of the European machine tool companies' understanding of corporate social responsibility and sustainability. The second one, 'Identification of best European practices', provides an analysis of best CSR practices implemented across the sector's value chain, in each of the four identified key areas.

In the following months, dissemination and outreach activities will be conducted, to ensure the project results reach the target stakeholders. To that end, CECIMO and other consortium partners will organize two dissemination events, in May 2014 at the Lamiera exhibition in Bologna, and in October 2014 at the Bi-Mu exhibition in Milan, to further communicate the project goals and the results achieved so far.

The project ends in December 2014. For further information please visit: www.designmts.eu.



"In the European machine tool industry, many practices aimed at improving social and environmental performance are already put in place by companies, such as the integration of environmental considerations in products and services or the organisation of training for the young and elderly workforce. DESIGN-MTS offers to machine tool companies an instrument to help turn their relevant activities into business and social value. This project will develop a voluntary and flexible approach for the use of companies who are keen to learn from the experience of others and who want to highlight their socially and environmentally valuable practices in their communication.

We witness that the role of communication in CSR is growing as customers are becoming increasingly demanding in their supply chain practices and citizens, especially young people, are eager to work for sectors which contribute to improving the quality of life in the society.

We expect that the impact of DESIGN-MTS on competitiveness and on the image of the sector will be a positive one."

Filip Geerts, CECIMO Director General