



SHARING EXPERIENCE EUROPE  
POLICY INNOVATION DESIGN

## Case Studies in Design Policy & Programmes

This case study was developed as part of the SEE project. SEE is a network of eleven European partners sharing experience and stimulating debate on how to integrate design into innovation policies at regional, national and European levels.

© Design Wales, 2011

All rights reserved. Reproduction of parts of this publication may be made without seeking permission from Design Wales, on condition that reference is clearly made to the source of the material.

[www.seeproject.org](http://www.seeproject.org)  
[www.designwales.org](http://www.designwales.org)

# Ecolizer 2.0

(BELGIUM)

Every year, approximately 3.4 million tonnes of household waste and 32 million tonnes of industrial waste are accumulated in Flanders and 308 municipalities work together with 27 associations to dispose of this waste. Traditional waste management focuses mainly on the end-of-life phase, where material becomes waste. However, managing the material chain as a whole, 'from cradle to cradle', is essential in finding sustainable answers to the waste problem.

In light of this, the [Public Waste Agency of Flanders \(OVAM\)](#) has sought to broaden the scope of its approach by implementing a series of initiatives to promote sustainable consumption and production, including:

- *Three trial projects, in close co-operation with the retail sector*, to stimulate the sale of environmentally friendly detergents, energy-saving lamps and energy-efficient tumble dryers.
- *Eco-efficiency scanprogramme* to identify opportunities for eco-efficiency improvements within small and medium enterprises.
- The *MAMBO* initiative, 'Less waste, more profit', a software package by which companies are able to calculate the true costs of their waste production.
- The web application *Producttest*, to help local authorities gauge the sustainability of their procurement.
- *PLAN C*, the Flemish Network for Sustainable Materials Management, in which industry, NGOs, research centres, the government and other organisations reflect on ways to develop policies for managing whole material cycles instead of classic waste strategies.


OVAM believes that to be successful it is essential that the initiatives and instruments be developed in close collaboration with the relevant social sector and with the creative techniques used by designers. Therefore OVAM chose to collaborate with [Design Flanders](#) – the design promotion unit in the 'Enterprise Flanders' agency – in two initiatives:

the Ecodesign Awards PRO and the Ecolizer. The Award intends to encourage designers and design students in the field of product development to integrate environmental criteria into their designs (for more information see the case study on the *Henry van de Velde* and *Ecodesign Awards* in the SEE Library <http://www.seeproject.org/casestudy> or visit [www.ovam.be/ecodesign](http://www.ovam.be/ecodesign)). The Ecolizer 2.0 was developed to help designers create more environmentally friendly products by making eco-design more accessible during the initial design phases.

The first Ecolizer was developed in 2005 for designers and product manufacturers as an introduction to eco-design and Life Cycle Thinking, and as a tool to assess the environmental impact of their products. The idea behind the Ecolizer originated from the fact that despite the wealth of academic information and software on eco-design, it is rarely applied by Flemish designers or businesses. The tool was also only available in Dutch. Four years on, an update was needed. In developing the new version, OVAM surveyed those 500 designers and companies who had employed the first Ecolizer in their projects. From this emerged the need for a digital version of the tool and for more detailed workshops and case studies. The Ecolizer 2.0, available in English, was launched in 2010.

The Ecolizer 2.0 employs an updated set of eco-indicators based on the 'ReCiPe' method rather than the previous 'Eco-indicator 99' methodology – both single-score indicator methodologies based on Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). This new method is still used to express the environmental impact of the production materials and all the subsequent stages in one eco-indicator number, so a designer can assess the sustainability of a creation in a quality score. OVAM chose the methodology and subcontracted an agency specialised in environmental issues, life cycle analysis and eco-design to develop the model and calculate the eco-indicators. A communication agency was responsible for the layout in a way that would appeal to designers. The Ecolizer 2.0, with its fan-like design, conveys complex academic content in a smart tool that is quick and easy to use in any design process and helps to incorporate environmental criteria into innovative products.

Three members of OVAM (two designers and an engineer) were responsible for delivering the project with a budget of €80,000 for development, printing and communication. To launch the Ecolizer several workshops were organised in collaboration with Design Flanders. OVAM intends to update the Ecolizer every three years from now on.

With the Ecolizer 2.0, OVAM introduces a scientifically based tool that contributes to increasing the eco-friendliness of any product design. Although it is not possible to assess how often or how successfully the Ecolizer is used by its target group, several prominent Flemish designers have referred to the Ecolizer when asked about how they apply eco-design. 

*For more information:* [www.ovam.be/ecolizer](http://www.ovam.be/ecolizer)

