

PROsumer.NET project:

The European **design-based Consumer Goods sector** represent a **substantial and vibrant part of the European economy**. While the borders between primarily design-driven versus primarily functionality driven consumer goods categories are not clearly demarcated, for the purpose of this project and the wider research collaboration initiative the following sectors are considered: **textiles, clothing, leather and footwear products, sports goods, games and toys, interior products made of different materials such as furniture, sanitary products, floor, wall and window coverings, table and kitchen ware, glassware and spectacles, watches, jewellery, bags & accessories and various cosmetic and beauty products as well as the design-oriented packaging of these and other products.**

While design & other aesthetic product features represent a significant and sometimes dominant value adding component to the consumer goods in question and crucial competitive asset to the companies providing them, many research and technology-related challenges are also important drives of business success in these sectors.

Four such key challenges have been identified which indeed constitute Strategic Research Themes (SRT) for all consumer goods sectors which have committed their active involvement in the PROsumer.NET project:

- **Advanced (multi)functionality of products for specific end applications and use scenarios**
- **Intelligent manufacturing and the smart value chain**
- **New design & product life cycle concepts**
- **Consumer empowerment and personalization.**

These and further challenges require substantial innovation efforts by the industry and provide formidable research opportunities for the scientific community and technology and service providers, a fact that is currently not sufficiently reflected in European Research Programmes. This is partly due to the fact the concerned sectors are very diverse, often fragmented and dominated by small to at best medium-sized companies, although as demonstrated above they represent in aggregate a substantial asset of the European economy with a strong global market impact. While the larger consumer goods sectors such as textiles and clothing, footwear and sports, furniture or paper products have organized themselves in Technology Platforms, delivered Strategic Research Agenda and are in general competent stakeholders in European research policy making process, many smaller sectors lack this organization and fail to contribute meaningfully to the political debate.

Therefore the ultimate goal of the PROsumer.NET project is to gather this diverse group of industrial and scientific communities, exploit synergies between the existing European Technology Platforms and exchange experience and best practices with smaller, less structured communities in the concerned sectors and technology fields in order to enable them to develop a strong and coherent voice for articulating at European level research priorities and implementation strategies for tackling major societal challenges with relevance to design-based consumer goods.