

Final Conference of the ECOTURF project

Eco-Innovation 2012 in the framework of a resource-efficient Europe

Mr. Fabio Leone, Project Officer at the European Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI) and responsible for the Ecoturf project, started his presentation with a brief overview of the project within the framework of the Eco-Innovation Programme. Ecoturf was one of the first projects co-funded by the Eco-Innovation Programme and it is in the first wave of projects about to finish. The original proposal of Ecoturf was one of the few submitted that addressed a challenge by covering the whole value chain, from the beginning (installation) until the end (maintenance, reuse and recycling).

Eco-Innovation is a flexible programme. It supports the market replication of sustainable innovations that resolve a problem which offer a clear market niche. Since Ecoturf was approved, the Eco-Innovation Programme has evolved and the new proposals have more quality and are more market-oriented. This has increased the competitiveness in the last calls. However, the potential for market replication has been reduced due to the economical crisis. The proposals submitted for the 2011 programme are still under evaluation. A 67% of the partners are SMEs, mainly micro and small companies, and an 80% of the total partners come from the private sector. The next call will open in April 2012, being the deadline on September 2012, and it has a total budget around 35 M€.



Mr. Fabio Leone, EACI

New: The proposal for the new Eco-Innovation Programme under the Horizon 2020 counts with a budget that triples the current one.

Examples of related EU best practices

Ms. Marta Valero, from IBV (ES), presented the conclusions of the [Ecorubber](#) project as an example of related EU good practice. This project is also co-funded by the Eco-Innovation Programme and has common partners with the Ecoturf project. Ecorubber has been able to produce bollards from recycled rubber and is in the process of designing an eco-label for recycled rubber. An eco-label is very useful to increase the awareness and promote recycled products among interested stakeholders.

Mr. Manuel Irún and Mr. Andreu Campos thanked the speakers and the attendees for their participation and closed the event. ■



Speakers and ECOTURF partners

Final Meeting: Fundación Comunidad Valenciana-Región Europea, Brussels (Belgium)

Brussels (14th December 2011): The partner in charge of communication and dissemination activities, Fundación Comunidad Valenciana-Región Europea (FCVRE) hosted the last meeting of the ECOTURF Project.

During the meeting all partners presented the results achieved until then, discussed the ongoing activities of the project and agreed upon the next steps needed, mainly about the international conference, the last deliverables foreseen until its ending and the justification of the project. It focused on:

- Implementation of the maintenance manager expert application (new equation arising from recent objective and subjective tests).
- Implementation of the in situ separation system (presentation of the most recent tests carried out in professional turf pitches).
- Implementation of the sub-product revalue system (evaluation of the properties of materials from removed pitches)
- Market application of the lifecycle management service (comparison of the cost of removing a football pitch by means of different solutions, including landfill, transport and staff costs, and time; estimation of the cost for a new pitch using reused materials; business plan). ■



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The Ecoturf project would fit into this category as an example of good practice with potential to be transferred to other countries, not only in Europe but also worldwide, since it is a market-oriented solution. However, one of the barriers that FIFA faces is that an 80% of its members do not have the means to implement sustainable solutions. Mr. Evans gave the example of the shipping costs entailed in the installation of an artificial turf field in Africa, which usually amounts to more than 50% of the total budget. Finally, Mr. Evans stressed that FIFA is open to cooperate with interested stakeholders and looking forward to listening the outcomes of Ecoturf.

Eco-efficient and cost-effective extended lifecycle management service for artificial turf: Final results of the Ecoturf project

Ms. Mercedes Sanchis, Coordinator of the project from the Instituto de Biomecánica de Valencia (IBV - ES), and Mr. Gert-Jan Kieft, from ISA-Sport (NL), summarized the results achieved by the end of this initiative.

Artificial turf pitches demand less maintenance and water than natural grass. But, according to recent studies, 157.000 tones of non-dangerous waste will be generated by these artificial surfaces in 2016. For this reason, the Ecoturf project aims to optimize and extend the lifecycle of artificial turf in a first instance. A web tool for maintenance operators has been created with this purpose. In a second stage, when artificial turf pitches become dangerous for sports practice and need to be removed, the Ecoturf project aims to reuse and recycle as many components as possible. A field can be removed completely and transported entirely to a landfill or, following a more sustainable methodology, a separation of its components can be carried out in-situ. Some materials can be reused in the new installation thus decreasing the use of new resources and avoiding transportation costs and CO₂ related emissions. Different alternatives have been studied and compared. Most of the current commercial solutions are not able to separate the materials in-situ in a cost-effective way. For those materials that cannot be reused in a new installation, several recycling methods have been tested, such as air washing and pellets production or cryogenic processing. The economical feasibility of the solution provided by Ecoturf depends largely on the landfill costs for the waste generated by the removal of a field, since prices differ significantly throughout Europe. The cost for a tone of waste at a landfill in Valencia amounts to 30€ whereas in Barcelona costs 50€ or, even, 200€ in Netherlands. This does not mean that the Ecoturf model is replicable only in those regions where landfill costs are high because other considerations that play a key role have to be taken into account: environmental legislation, policies regarding reuse of building materials, expected increase of prices for fossil fuels and related raw materials... For instance, the removal of an old synthetic turf pitch and the installation of a new one, by reusing some materials and by setting the previous carpet into another location, save approximately a 58% of the original budget (complete removal, landfill deposit and installation of a new surface).



Ms. Sanchis and Mr. Kieft, ECOTURF

Next events

2012

[Green Week Conference 2012](#) to focus on water, 22-25 May, Brussels (BE).

[EU Sustainable Energy Week](#), 18-22 June, Brussels (BE).

[OPEN DAYS 2012](#), 08-11 October, Brussels (BE).

European added value

The project impact on employment is mostly related to the business generated by the ECOTURF model, creating employment opportunities for the development of the action. Based on the expected turnover increase for the consortium, which accounts for 30 million €, and taking into consideration an average of 100 K€ per employee, 300 new job opportunities can be created in Europe in the medium term (2013) derived only from the consortium exploitation of the ECOTURF model.

The increasing awareness in Europe about environmental impacts together with the introduction of new environmental standards could become an obstacle to some actors of the market (especially to SMEs). With its proposed model of lifecycle management and reduced environmental impact, ECOTURF action will help the sector to anticipate this situation. ■



Presentation of partners



Leader: INSTITUTO BIOMECÁNICA DE VALENCIA

The IBV is a Spanish Research and Development Center that studies the behavior of the human body and its interaction with products, environment and services. The IBV is a European reference center for sports and physical activity, specifically on sport surface research, standard tests and homologation. Among its main project activities, the development of expert applications and testing equipment for footwear and sports sectors, among others, is included. It is the partner responsible for the development of the new expert maintenance application for enlarging the service life of the product and the validation analysis of the pilot implementation results.

www.ibv.org



POLIGRAS

POLIGRAS IBERICA, S.A. is the Spanish leader in manufacturing and installing artificial turf carpets for sports and landscape uses. Poligras has been involved in research activities related to environmental issues. One of them is to revalue the large amounts of artificial turf waste currently moved to landfill.

Its main role in the project consists of transferring its knowledge in infill materials separation to contribute to this new development. Poligras represents the route to the market for the pilot implementation of the project.

www.poligras.es



ISA SPORT

ISA Sport is a worldwide reference Dutch RTD centre involved in four types of activities connected with the sports practice: research, consultancy, equipment development and testing.

Its role in the project is to analyze the loss of properties caused by the use and to identify the end of the service life of artificial turf pitches, by contributing to the development of the new expert maintenance application and leading the development of the new in situ separation tool.

www.isa-sport.com



ACTECO

Acteco is an experienced Spanish SME aimed at waste management and environmental consulting. It possesses various factories with long experience in the treatment and recycling of plastic containers, dangerous containers, and textiles, metal, ceramic, chemical etc. waste materials or products.

One of its identified business opportunity areas is carpet disposal and revalue.

www.acteco.es



RECIPNEU

Recipneu is a Portuguese rubber recycling company. It is the reference and sole Industrial Company in Europe regarding cryogenic tire and rubber recycling technology.

Its main roles are the production of Cryogenic Rubber Powders and Granulates and the profitable valorisation of all the materials resulting from end of life tires recycling, through applications with market value and benefits perception.

www.recipneu.com



FUNDACIÓN COMUNIDAD VALENCIANA—REGIÓN EUROPEA

FCVRE is a non-profit organization set up by the Valencian Regional Government to dynamize the participation of all the regional sectors in EU's policies by promoting a better knowledge of EU's initiatives and also helping them identify new opportunities for sustainable development.

Its role in the project consist of carrying out Communication and Dissemination activities.

www.uegva.info

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Editorial

As partners of the ECOTURF project we are glad to present you this newsletter designed to share with you our experiences in the implementation of the project as well as its results. We are convinced that implementing this new in situ separation system for artificial turf will contribute remarkably to both European development and job creation. Should you need any further information or ideas referred to the topics included in this issue, please contact directly to any of the regional partners whose contact details are included in this page. ■

Final Conference of the ECOTURF project

The ECOTURF project has celebrated its ending with an International Conference in Brussels, where the main results obtained so far were presented. The timing was excellent as the European Commission published last September the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe as part of the resource-efficient Europe Flagship Initiative of the Europe 2020 Strategy. That is why the ECOTURF consortium invited the main stakeholders involved in the whole value chain of synthetic turf, from researchers and installers, to maintainers, management companies and sport organizations.

The first part of the seminar was focused on the Ecoturf project whereas the second one was oriented towards the Eco-Innovation programme, including some tips for its next call, and other examples of good practices co-funded by the Eco-Innovation Programme. The original agenda of the event and the presentations are available [here](#). The international conference on "A resource-efficient and market-oriented solution for sustainable sport facilities: the Ecoturf project" took place on 15th December at the Climate-KIC office in Brussels (Belgium). Thirty-six people registered to the event including local and regional public agents, government bodies, companies involved in the synthetic turf sector and partners from other Eco-Innovation projects. Although the attendance was lower than expected, the audience was involved in a very lively discussion with the speakers.

Opening Session

Ms. Laura Bas, Responsible for Sustainability at the Valencian Regional Office in Brussels, and Ms. Mercedes Sanchis, Ecoturf Coordinator, opened the conference. During her speech, Ms. Bas welcomed the attendees and thanked the Climate-KIC for hosting the event in its facilities at the European core of Brussels. Ms. Sanchis highlighted the importance of looking for equilibrium among sports, business and sustainability in the framework of a resource efficient Europe and a deep economical crisis.



Ms. Sanchis and Ms. Bas, FCVRE

Artificial Turf Pitches: a Sustainable Solution for Sports Practice

The framework of the International Federation of Football Associations quality concept for artificial turf pitches was presented by Mr. Nicolas Evans, FIFA Quality Concept Manager. This concept simplifies the installing process for the end-users and promotes the implementation of environmental-friendly practices. FIFA does not develop any product but has the competence to penalize bad examples and, at the same time, support good examples by providing incentives.



Mr. Nicolas Evans, FIFA

Key aspects

Programme: Eco-Innovation
Budget: 940,018€
Length: 24 Months Starting date: 01/09/2009 Ending date: 31/12/2011
Partners: IBV (Spain), Isa—Sport (Holland), Poligras (Spain), Recipneu (Portugal), Acteco (Spain), FCVRE (Spain)