

Ecodesign strategies and the product development process within northeast sme brazilian companies

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Abstract: This research work is part of the *Instituto Fabric of Millennium ?IFM?* a national project which aims to support the product development process within Brazilian companies and financially supported by CNPq. The research aims to identify the use of Ecodesign Strategies within Northeast and Southeast Brazilian Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and their external and internal drivers as well as the *roadblocks?* for their implementation. In order to achieve these goals a research methodology approach was set. The initial stage of the research methodology was based upon an extensive literature survey. Then, a questionnaire was developed aiming to identify whether Brazilian SME companies within these regions are taking into account environmental aspects during their product development process. The questionnaire was used to support a series of visits and interviews with designers and people responsible for the product design within 49 SMEs located at Northeast and Southeast regions of Brazil. This work has shown that legislation and government regulations were the main external drivers for companies to adopt Ecodesign strategies within their product development while environmental and production cost reduction; and the opportunity for new markets were considered to be the main internal driver for Northeast and Southeast regions respectively. The main roadblocks for implementing Ecodesign were the lack of market demand for environmental friendly products and the perceived view from companies that the development of *green?* products will bring commercial drawbacks to them.

Keywords: Ecodesign practices, northeast and southeast Brazilian SME, product development,

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