



Federal Ecodesign Award for Frosch Recyclate Initiative

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The Mainz-based company Werner & Mertz has received the Federal Ecodesign Award in recognition of its innovative, cross-industry Recyclate Initiative. The German Federal Ministry for the Environment (BMU) and the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) jointly honored the trusted Frosch brand for its process of recovering high-quality PET granules from the Yellow Bag household waste system for use in the manufacture of transparent PET packaging for cleaning products and detergents. The new bottles made of up to 40 percent mixed PET waste are sustainable and also recognizable in their familiar design. The label on the product informs the consumer of the Recyclate Initiative.

Wanted: environmentally safe consumption



Timothy Glaz (left) and Reinhard Schneider received the Federal Ecodesign Award for the Werner & Mertz Recyclate Initiative from Federal Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks. Photo credit: Sandra Kühnapfel/Werner & Mertz

"Sustainable products are an important prerequisite to environmentally safe consumption. For this purpose we need people with ideas, imagination and corporate courage. The federal Ecodesign Award promotes and recognizes such engagement. The individual products have



once again shown that ecologically sophisticated models can also be aesthetically designed," said Federal Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks in her opening remarks at the awards ceremony in Berlin. The discoloration of the PET recyclate bottles from Werner & Mertz is so slight that it escapes the consumer's notice. "We want to make it attractive for as many consumers as possible to decide in favor of sustainability when they are standing in front of the store shelves," said Reinhard Schneider in explanation of the company's objective. The managing partner of Werner & Mertz personally accepted the prize from the Federal Environment Minister.

13 award winners from 200 submissions

Altogether 13 projects received awards in the categories of Product, Concept, Service and Young Talent. The jury of environment and design experts, including Parliamentary State Secretary at BMUB Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter, selected the nominees and award winners from 200 submissions. In the high-quality entries jury chairman Günter Horntrich sees a clear indication that the status of ecological design is rising and that sustainable design has long since shaken off its earlier eco-look image, according to a joint press release from the BMU, UBA and jury. The Federal Ecodesign Award, which has been awarded annually since 2012, puts environmental assessment and design evaluation on equal footing.

PET recyclate bottle: Unaltered appearance is the deliberate challenge

The entire product lifecycle is evaluated in terms of sustainability, from preliminary production stages and manufacturing, distribution and use to recycling, re-use and disposal. The Recyclate Initiative concept is based on the components of high-tech innovation, Cradle2Cradle, upcycling, new processes and formulas, cooperation and the idea of "open innovation" in which everyone can get involved. "The formula for the PET material is new and has to meet demanding usage requirements with regard to form, function and feel. The deliberate challenge is a product appearance that is unchanged at first glance, an important aspect in consumers' acceptance," said Timony Glaz, Manager of Corporate Affairs and Werner & Mertz and spokesman for the Recyclate Initiative. "One hundred thousand bottles with twenty percent PET recyclates from the Dual System were filled and brought to market and not one customer complaint was received."

Still another innovation in the initiative is its joint cross-industry supply chain. Partners in the supply chain to date include the dual system Green Dot (DSD), the globally active packaging company ALPLA of Austria, the trading, travel and tourism company REWE Group, the German Society for the Preservation of Nature (NABU), the manufacturer of sensor systems UNISENSOR of Karlsruhe and the FROSCH brand of Werner & Mertz.

The jury offered words of praise for the cooperative effort. "The Frosch Recyclate Initiative was given the award for the innovative approach that makes old plastic from the Yellow Bag available for use in consumer products. Right now some 20 to 40 percent of PET from the Yellow Bag is being used in Frosch bottles. Another positive point is that the consumer is informed of the Initiative on the bottle's label," wrote jury member Dr. Dietlinde Quack about the special merits of the Recyclate Initiative.



Federal award: Traveling exhibition in 2015

"In all our efforts we should not slacken our efforts to incorporate ecological criteria in product development," said Federal Environment Agency President Maria Krautzberger in her speech. "Most important are the legal regulations in the eco design directive and design education and training. In the end, we have to shape a sustainable and livable future and for that purpose we need engaged product designers."

Besides the Frosch Recyclate Initiative, other awards were given to energy-saving and repairable electronic products, innovative transportation systems for city traffic, a sustainable fashion collection, environmentally safe production processes for the making of leather, eyeglasses and textiles and an online CO2 reduction game. The award-winning projects will be presented in a traveling exhibition throughout the country in 2015.

The Federal Ecodesign Award is not the only prize the Mainz manufacturer of cleaning products, dishwashing and laundry detergents has accepted for the Recyclate Initiative. The red frog very recently won the Special Prize 2014 from the German Packaging Institute, which has been awarded since 1963 by a jury made up of experts from business, research, education and the trade press under the patronage of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs.

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