Sustainable Design: A furniture focused approach

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Abstract:
Working on the principle that sustainable design is the next step for ecodesign, because, besides the economic and ecologic values, it includes all aspects related with sustainable development, and knowing that it needs to become a more practical and workable subject, this research intends to develop tools and information that product designers can use in their work process, that will enable a more sustainable outcome. Based on the conclusions of several authors that principles, strategies and tools have a best performance when oriented to a specific kind of product, this research faces the problem through an approach focused on a specific area of activity and their products: domestic wood furniture.

This paper presents the state of the art of the overlap in product design methods, ecodesign tools, furniture products life cycle information, and sustainability. It will also be presented and discussed the first year of empirical information gathering on the Portuguese furniture industry and on the involvement of an expert panel.

This paper will discuss the possibility of reaching a sustainable design practice, in this sector, through a focused approach.