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The importance of technical specifications for stone construction products - The case study of "StonePT brand", a product certification for Portuguese stone

Lopes, L.^{1,2}, Marques, C.³, Peres, M.²

¹ Associação Valorpedra, Portuguese Dimension Stone Cluster, Portugal, lopes@uevora.pt

² Instituto de Ciências da Terra / Dept. Geociências, E.C.T., Universidade de Évora, Portugal

³ ASSIMAGRA, Associação Portuguesa dos Industriais de Mármore, Granitos e Ramos Afins, Portugal

StonePT brand is a certification product that intends to fulfil an existent void in natural stone market in regarding quarry locations and quality assurance associated with transformation processes and, not less important, with adequacy of use that each type of stone has for different applications, particularly those employed in the construction sector. StonePT certification is focused on Portuguese Stone recognition in the international market, so that it gains an already earned highlight and kept known as an add-value construction product. The case-studies of companies certified with StonePT demonstrated to accomplish the requirements based in three main pillars: stone origin, skills to transform and control the final product, and knowledge concerning suitability of use for each type of stone in each application (requirements for the end-user). The Natural Stone Cluster recognition by the Portuguese government resulted in the establishment of Valorpedra Association (VAPE). This national recognition as a historical of consolidation strategies already pointed in several studies [1, 2, 3, 4] and allow development and increase competitiveness of the Dimension Stone Sector for which specific funds were available. The implemented measures potentiated networking among enterprises and development of partnership projects.

VAPE is a nonprofit association that manages and promotes Natural Stone Cluster, and the StonePT brand, seeking a Strategy for Collective Efficiency. Its mission is to implement initiatives relating to Mineral Resources for innovation, qualification and modernization of the industry. It also aims to strengthen cooperation among companies, business associations, technology centers, R & D, training centres and other entities, thus contributing to the implementation of technology transfer processes, and therefor increase productivity, competitiveness and innovation. As a strategy to achieve the mission objectives is proposed to consolidate and invest in the conquest of foreigners markets, strong and precise resources classification and technological, productive innovation and territorial organization.

Since Cluster the activities beginning on 17 July 2009, over 60 M€ were invested, corresponding to more than 40 M€ of government support and more than 20 M€ to equity investors. Thus, in countercyclical with a general downturn of the Portuguese economy, in 2013 the Natural Stone sector grew 28%. These results were made possible thanks to marketing and promotion strategies undertaken in major international fairs and underpinned by recognition of the Natural Stone Cluster as the relevant economic activity sector for the country – the StonePT brand.

This work presents the principal measures that have been implemented, the projects developed and the most important results achieved in each of them, regarding the international recognition of the StonePT brand.

References:

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[2] CEVALOR (2008) – Candidatura: Estratégias de Eficiência Colectiva – Cluster da Pedra Natural, 88.

[3] CEVALOR (2009) – Cluster da Pedra Natural, Reformulação do Programa de Acção. Candidatura às Estratégias de Eficiência Colectiva (EEC) - Reconhecimento do Cluster da Pedra Natural, 112.

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