

*Business alliance in R+D+i*

## **LA SEDA DE BARCELONA IS DEVELOPING THE FIRST RECYCLABLE PET FOR THE AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR**

- *The chemical group has been able to develop together with Ficosa and Zanini the first PET rear mirror and wheelcap for the automotive sector.*
- *PETAUTO is thus getting access to a potential market of 300.000 tons / year of PET. The new product will be supplied from El Prat de Llobregat and may achieve savings of more than 50%.*

Barcelona, 17 March 2010.- In a clear commitment to introducing new value-added products into the market, La Seda de Barcelona has developed PETAUTO, a project oriented towards improving recycling and sustainability in the automotive industry.

PETAUTO is a threefold project which the chemical group has developed through its R+D+i Technology Centre Leitiat, together with two of the most important automotive component manufacturers: Ficosa, world leader in rear view mirror systems and fuel deposits and Zanini, world leader in hubcaps and anagrams.

Investigation results have allowed to obtain prototypes of wheelcaps, anagrams and rear mirrors out of PET, which is a 100% recyclable and sustainable product. In this sense, La Seda de Barcelona has initiated proceedings to obtain an international patent for this newly developed polymer, for its intellectual property protection.

The PETAUTO characteristics will allow La Seda de Barcelona to have access to a new potential market of approx. 300.000 tons of PET, which is the annual volume of polyamid (PA) and ABS compounds the European automotive industry consumes. This new product, the use of which may be equivalent to savings of more than 50% compared to the technical plastics and polyamids that are currently in use, will be produced at and supplied from the La Seda de Barcelona plant in El Prat de Llobregat.

This business initiative was started back in 2008 with an investment of 1,7 million euros, co-financed to 38% by CIDEM and FEDER funds, with the clear objective to replace the materials used until then by Zanini and Ficosa, that is PA and ABS, by the new PET compounds. In order to achieve this objective, La Seda de Barcelona's R+D+i centre in the Technology Centre of Leitiat (Terrassa) together with the laboratory and technical personnel of Artenius Prat have

carried out a thorough investigation on the most used additives, that would provide PET with the necessary characteristics for its use in the automotive sector.

Moreover, this innovative development is contributing to comply with the European standards (Directive 2000/53/CE) which are forcing the automotive sector to design and manufacture vehicles with 85% of its components being made of recycled material. This standard will be extended to 95% from 2015 onwards.

The Manager for Industrial Cooperation of the Technology Centre LEITAT, Antoni Pons points out that “the use of PET for these products offers new advantages to its use and excellent technical characteristics such as being recyclable, production cost reduction and the use of sustainable material, apart from a lower energy cost in the transformation process .”

At present, La Seda de Barcelona’s main product is PET, a recyclable polymer which finds its main appliances in the nutritional packaging sector. PETAUTO is the first project to be developed by the company to tackle new and potential markets, such as construction, optics, renewable energy, cosmetics, pharmacy and aeronautics.

According to José Luis Morlanes, President of La Seda de Barcelona, “La Seda’s business strategy includes the development of recyclable plastics that are environmentally respectful. This project is an example of a sustainable economic change based on the company’s increase of production capacity” and he further points out “a competitive and innovative initiative as a solution for the current economic crisis”.

On the other hand, Joan Miquel Torras, CEO of Zanini admits that “thanks to this project and the resulting prototypes, we may rapidly adjust to the requirements of European standards in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction in our manufacturing processes as well as higher recyclability percentages of our products”.

Finally , Josep Maria Tarragó, Executive Vice-President of Ficosa Group adds that “from its beginnings the company has promoted and developed its activity in R + D + i with the objective to offer quality products with a high degree of added value to our customers. In this sense, we are developing projects, such as PETAUTO in order to find and generate synergies, optimize and share resources and above all, generate and manage knowledge through technology transfer.”

### **R+D+i at La Seda de Barcelona**

This business agreement is the chemical group's commitment to investigation and innovation as key axes for the development of business activity.

Since its creation, La Seda de Barcelona is placing a special emphasis on research and development as a spearhead for achieving a high degree of added value in the markets where it is operating. La Seda de Barcelona's Development Centre, origin for the analysis and creation of new products and strategy is a selfevident proof of this.

Moreover, since the end of 2007, the company has a Centre of Excellence in Brecht (Belgium), which is unique in Europe, where new PET developments are being analysed. The scientific complex is equipped with a state-of-the-art test laboratory, a pilot plant for bottle blowing and a bottle trial centre.

**SEDA GROUP** is European leader and the third worldwide company in the PET Packaging sector. A major industrial group with production plants in 11 European countries.

**LEITAT** is a Technology Centre, its purpose being to provide services to companies of the industrial sector, by adding technological value to products and processes. It focuses its work on research, development and innovation (R+D+i), LEITAT's services are clearly prone towards adapting and evolving in view of the constant market changes.

**ZANINI**, was created in 1965 and has in recent times become a leading company, specialised in manufacturing plastic components through a value-added injection molding procedure in the automotive sector. To provide a global service to its customers, Zanini owns several production plants in Spain, France, Chec Republic, United States, Mexico and Brasil and sales offices in Germany and China and strategic alliances in Turkey and India. Additionally the company owns technology and development centres in the USA and Spain, this one is located in Parets del Vallés (Barcelona) and focuses on innovation activities.

**FICOSA**, is a family run business, which was created in 1949 and is dedicated to research, development, production and marketing systems and components for automobiles, commercial, industrial and special vehicles. The company headquarters are based in Barcelona (Spain) and it employs worldwide 6.800 people, having a global presence with production plants, engineering centres and sales offices in 19 countries in Europe, North America, South America and Asia.