



PRESS RELEASE – November 2023
30th Annual Meeting of the World Ceramic Tiles Forum
Puebla, Mexico



The **2023 World Ceramic Tiles Forum (WCTF)** took place from **5 to 8 November**, in **Puebla, Mexico**, kindly hosted by **TCNA - the Tile Council of North America**. The meetings were held in conjunction with the **ISO TC189 meetings** held from **9 to 11 November**.

This edition of the Forum was attended by representatives from **Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Spain, Türkiye, Ukraine, the United States of America and the European Union**. The **WCTF** was honoured by the presence of a representative of the Government of the city of Puebla, who kindly welcomed all the participants and opened the Forum.

The Forum provided an opportunity to discuss **global trends in the production and consumption of ceramic tiles**. Worldwide production in ceramic tiles **decreased by 6 %** in 2022 compared to 2021 based on the data provided by WCTF members representing a total world production of 13,6 billion sq.m. When considering other countries with significant production not involved in the WCTF such as Egypt, Iran, Vietnam or the United Arab Emirates, the worldwide production in ceramic tiles can be estimated in the range of 15 billion sq.m. In addition to the global level and European level, each country attending the **WCTF** offered insight into **national general trends** and **regulatory framework** affecting ceramic tiles and the construction sector.

Moreover, the **WCTF** examined **key developments related to trade aspects**, with members exchanging information on multilateral and bilateral free trade negotiations and technical barriers to trade taking the form of mandatory certification, export licensing, etc. The Forum served too as a platform to continue monitoring the **implementation of the revised Harmonised System (HS) custom codes for ceramic tiles**, which entered into force in 2017. WCTF guidelines on the 2017 HS codes are available upon request. A total of 107 countries have now fully implemented the revised HS code 6907 on ceramic tiles. This year the Members also discussed the **customs classification of large panels** and agreed to explore with a group of experts potential actions to ensure large panels are properly reported under ceramic tiles customs codes.

Held in conjunction with **ISO/TC189**, the Forum looked closely at the latest developments in **international standardisation**. The WCTF strongly welcomes the closer cooperation between ISO TC 189 and the WCTF which has been promoted by both bodies over the last years.

The **WCTF** also explored in detail developments on current **trends in competing materials, health and safety**, and **climate & energy** in the context of the current worldwide sustainability endeavour. In that respect, members discussed the LBP SIGHT study on “**Carbon Accounting for Building Materials, An assessment of Global Warming Potential of biobased construction products**” (study available here: <https://www.ca4bm.org/>). Similarly, ongoing policy initiatives in the United States and in some European countries addressing the embodied carbon of buildings and building materials were discussed. A detailed report was provided by the ISO TC 189 WG 12 convener on the current status of the ongoing work to develop a standard calculation for full-lifecycle **embodied carbon** in ceramic tiles, taking into account manufacturing, installation, use, maintenance, replacement, and disposal phases, also known as lifecycle modules A1 through C4.

To close the forum, **WCTF** Members discussed **current and future communication initiatives** to be implemented throughout the respective networks of WCTF members. Such initiatives are designed to increase awareness and worldwide visibility of Ceramic Tiles as a sustainable and safe covering material, communicate on the importance of ceramic tiles as essential products, contributing to the well-being of society, communicate on technical characteristics & specifications, application requirements & guidelines of ceramic tiles for educational purposes and the general public’s information, and finally to disseminate existing no-logo promotional campaigns on ceramic tiles.

We look forward to the next meeting of the **WCTF**, which will take place in **Portugal**, kindly hosted by **APICER – Portuguese Association of Ceramics and Domestic Glass Industries** on **17, 18 and 19 November 2024**, followed by the ISO TC 189 meeting. The specific location of the **2024 WCTF** will be announced shortly on the **WCTF website** (<http://www.worldceramictiles.org/>).

ABOUT THE WCTF: The WCTF was created in 1994 and is the annual meeting of the ceramic tiles manufacturers worldwide. The WCTF is a platform open to all ceramic tiles manufacturers in the world. Any producer or association of ceramic tiles producers wishing to participate is invited to contact the WCTF secretariat.

World Ceramic Tiles Forum

Rue Belliard 12 - 1040 Brussels, Belgium

t. +32 2 808 38 80 | www.worldceramictiles.org | e-mail : events@cerameunie.eu