

Knowledge Mining from LCA Studies for Product Sustainability and Effective LCM Practices

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Organized by

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DTIE, Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch

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Draft Background: The Objectives and Scope

Background

In early February 2011, 48 participants from 23 countries gathered in Shonan Village, southeast of Tokyo, for the Workshop on Global Guidance Principles for Life Cycle Assessment, a Pellston workshop¹ (informally to be known as the 'Shonan Guidance Principles Workshop') to develop principles for creating, managing, and disseminating datasets for the purpose of supporting life cycle assessments (LCAs) of globally produced products and services. After this workshop on Life Cycle Inventory questions, the Life Cycle Initiative organized a 1-day workshop on Life Cycle Impact Assessment in Milan on 20 May 2011.

Both workshops had a focus on the tool of Life Cycle Assessment. However, since its launch in 2002 the Life Cycle Initiative has always strived for maintaining a balance between the assessment side and the management side of life cycle thinking. Publications and training material on Life Cycle Management have been prepared and are one of the Initiative's deliverables with most attention. In a way to capitalize on efforts done within and outside the Initiative in the area of Life Cycle Management and with a focus on consumption clusters, it is suggested to look at the topic of mining knowledge on product sustainability from available Life Cycle Assessment studies to establish LCM practices in the public and private sector. Evidently, the question of the indicators to define product sustainability is also important in this context.

The workshop is inspired by growing interest in using results of LCA for product sustainability standards setting and the recent launch of the proposed work on the 'Value of a Life Cycle Approach in Evaluating the Environmental Impacts of Packaging for Food Applications' that has the purpose to develop clear articulation of the benefits of the life cycle approach to design, manufacturing, use and end of life management of packaging for food applications. The value of this articulation will be to educate audiences to better inform decision and policy making in this particular value chain. The question has come up if not a similar type of studies could be developed also for other consumption clusters and product groups like built environment, mobility, ICT and personal home & care.

Objective

In this context, this workshop will help to (1) exchange experiences and strengthen the capabilities of business and organizations in mining LCM knowledge from LCA studies, (2) develop ideas on what the Life Cycle Initiative could do to support more use of LCA studies and LCA databases for informing decisions on product sustainability and establish LCM practices in the public and private sector.

¹ The Pellston format, established by the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) in the 1970s and used since in some 50 workshops worldwide, strives for a consensus approach among a diverse group of experts.

Tentative Agenda

Agenda

- 07:45 - 08:00** Registration
- 08:00 - 08:30** Welcome and Introduction to the workshop by UNEP/SETAC
Expectations and introduction of participants
- 08:30 - 09:00** Possibilities for mining LCM knowledge from LCA Studies and LCA Databases
(presentations of 10 minutes)
- Seeds4Green (Hélène Teulon, Gingko 21)
 - Gabi (TBC, PE International)
 - Ecoinvent (Bo Weidema, Ecoinvent Centre)
- 09:00 - 09:45** Examples for mining knowledge on product sustainability from LCA Studies
(presentations of 10 minutes)
- Drafting a report on the Value of a Life Cycle Approach in Evaluating the Environmental Impacts of Packaging for Food Applications (Jim Fava)
 - Mining of knowledge to inform recycling policies (TBC, ADEME)
 - Preparing Product Category Rules for a Hygiene Paper (Ellen Riise, SCA)
 - Developing a Product Sustainability Standard for Home Appliances (TBC, CSA)
- 09:45 - 10:00** *Coffee Break*
- 10:00 - 11:00** Four parallel break out groups on different consumption clusters
(with introductory presentations of 5 minutes in each group)
- Guiding question:** what can we learn from existing LCA studies on LCM practices to manage/reduce the sustainability impacts of cluster group 1, 2 3 and 4?
1. Mobility (TBC, Volkswagen)
 2. ICT (TBC, The Sustainability Consortium)
 3. Personal Home & Care (TBC)
 4. Built environment (Clare Broadbent, Worldsteel)
- 11:00 - 11:30** Presentations back to plenary by break-out groups
- 11:30 - 12:15** Plenary discussion on next steps
- 12:15 - 12:30** Wrap-up and Closure by UNEP/SETAC