

Special Session: LCA networks: comparison of experiences

Organized by the Italian LCA Network (Rete Italiana di LCA www.reteitalianalca.it)

21st SETAC Annual Meeting, Milan (Italy)

Background

LCA applications have been increasing in number in the last years, probably due to two main factors. Firstly the increasing importance of life cycle thinking in the regulatory process at national and European level. Indeed, the life cycle approach has been implemented in the most recent communications and directives on the environment and it is considered a qualifying element – sometimes even mandatory - in any sustainability evaluation. The second factor is represented by the increasing awareness among business and consumers of the need of adopting more sustainable behaviours.

There have been important improvements and developments, which contribute to make LCA more robust, increasing its consistency and compatibility with policy and industry contexts. This process was supported also by several important institutions at European level. The European Platform on LCA, created in 2005, became a key organization to promote efforts mainly related to the research area and the development of life-cycle based policy guidelines. SETAC Europe and the SETAC LCA Steering Committee have also supported the permanent evolution of the life cycle community through the organization of spaces for exchange.

Besides these international initiatives, several other national/regional and sectoral networks have been created, grouping an increasing number of LCA practitioners. Indeed, there is an apparent will and need of communication and of synergy with other experts involved in life cycle research, education or applications. Universities and National Research Councils or Agencies are the main promoters, but also some consultant's structures have a well-recognized role.

Some of these networks have a very high level of advancement, as they have been effective for several years, and have brought together experts and users in very specific fields, while others are still developing. Sharing the experiences among the networks can provide useful insights for better enhancing life cycle practices and learning from most advanced and successful stories on the promotion of life cycle based practices, applications and use in the decision making processes.

Goals

The Special Session on LCA networks is aimed at providing a platform for exchange of experiences among LCA networks with the purpose of:

- Better understand the role of networks in the present phase of the LCA;
- Raising more awareness on their activities, with dissemination of life cycle issues;
- Fostering their development and interaction with national and international regulation;
- Learning from success stories.

A plan for the expansion of networking activities will be discussed and main recommendations will be defined.

Program: Tuesday 17 May 2011 16:30 - 18:30

16:30 - 16:40	Goal & Scope of the Special Session (Paolo Masoni, ENEA)
16:40 - 16:55	The LCA networks at global level (Sonia Valdivia, UNEP SETAC Life Cycle Initiative)
16:55 - 17:10	IberoAmerican Life Cycle Network: from strategy to action (Ana Quiros, IberoAmerican LC Network)
17:10 - 17:25	The Hungarian LCA network (Klára Szita Tóthné, University of Miskolc)
17:25 - 17:40	20 years of LCA network activities in Switzerland: The contribution of the LCA forum to the scientific debate (Rolf Frischknecht, LCA Discussion Forum)
17:40 - 17:55	The Italian LCA network (Bruno Notarnicola, LCA Italian Network)
17:55 - 18:10	SETAC Networking for Global LCA Science and Practice (Bruce Vigon, SETAC)
18:10 - 18:30	Discussion and Session wrap up

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