

Analysing tradeoffs between social and other dimensions of sustainability in LCA

Pekka Leskinen, Katja Lahinen and Tanja Myllyviita

Finnish Environment Institute, Joensuu Office (Finland)

Evaluating environmental impacts of products and services has been traditionally the main focus in LCA. Recently, also social sustainability has been received increasing interest in addition to ecological sustainability. In conscious decision making, however, decision makers should take into account all dimensions of sustainability and evaluate the overall characteristics of alternative production chains. In this presentation, we analyze how social sustainability should be measured so that potential tradeoffs between social and other dimensions of sustainability can be explicitly considered. We utilize the combination of multi-criteria analysis (MCA) techniques and LCA so that sustainability indicators are defined for evaluating the sustainability of concrete decision alternatives in a regionally specified case. Moreover, we analyze the suitability of different problem structuring and preference rating techniques for defining case-specific sustainability indicators.