

Developed a new operational methodology to improve the sustainability of products

- **This operational methodology aims to promote sustainable circular solutions by providing companies with a toolbox of methodologies, tools and training materials to understand, measure and manage product's sustainability, along the whole product life cycle.**
- **ORIENTING is the name of the research and innovation project that has brought together 17 organisations, companies and universities across Europe over 3 years and a half to develop this project.**
- **The methodology and related toolbox were discussed with policy makers, industrial actors and a broad range of stakeholders, in the framework of the World Circular Economy Forum 2024 in Brussels last 18 April.**

The ORIENTING project presented its final results last April 18th during the project Final Conference in Brussels (Belgium), which included also an accelerator session under the World Circular Economy Forum 2024. 120 people attended the event, both in person and online, to get to know all the work done by the project partners and to discuss about the role of Life Cycle Sustainability Assessment methodologies in supporting the policy process.

The main results of the project have been the development of several materials, consisting in methodologies and tools, that aim to help companies, organizations and researchers, among other stakeholders, to implement a Life Cycle Sustainability Assessment (LCSA) to products, services and processes.

With all these materials, the ORIENTING project wants to boost a sustainable transition in all the companies, with a focus on SMEs, and make steps to help accomplish the European Green Deal. ORIENTING has engaged with policy makers about the use of LCSA in the policy process, discussing about and identifying what would be needed for creating a market for sustainable products and activities in the European Union.

The LCSA methodology

The first and most important outcome from the ORIENTING project is the development of an operational and robust Life Cycle Sustainability Assessment (LCSA) methodology of products that includes circularity and criticality aspects.

This methodology has been tested with the products of five partners from different sectors: indoor paints (BASF, chemical), concrete recycling technology (Leiblein, construction), three tomato-based products (Solana, agrifood), beverage carton package (Stora Enso, packaging) and outdoor jacket (Ternua, textiles).



The development and testing of the methodology was successful, demonstrating its applicability and helped the involved companies in identifying their sustainability hotspots and gain insights into before unknown aspects of their supply chains.

All the work done during the project has been built upon existing initiatives, standards and principles and has focused on relevant topics and lowering barriers for the implementation, so all kind of companies can use the methodology. Two levels of the assessment have been introduced to help beginners and advanced users both in introducing the idea of life cycle thinking and the principle of double materiality and apply the LCSA in their products.

The ORIENTING toolbox

In order to help all the users in the implementation of the LCSA methodology, the project has also developed a toolbox with several elements that will guide them through the assessment.

The first element is the LCSA methodology accompanied supported by a handbook and supplementing reports, providing guidance to perform the assessment of the LCSA as a whole and the domains and topics in isolation, namely environmental, economic, social, circularity and criticality assessment. This handbook is addressed to in-house sustainability departments, practitioners of sustainability methodologies and policy makers.

The second material is the entry-level materiality assessment, a support package that provides guidance for users towards a preliminary identification and understanding of potentially relevant sustainability topics and impacts in the product life cycle. This package is addressed to companies, particularly SMEs, and beginners and less experienced users in life cycle approaches. It also offers information about the product life cycle, the double materiality concept, the LCSA goal and its scope definition.

The third material is the LCSA integration tool that supports the interpretation of the LCSA results, shows the hotspot aspects and compares diverse scenarios among other useful information. The tool, addressed to users familiar with LCSA and life cycle-based methods, also generates an integrated visualisation of the results and offers calculations on the integration towards aggregated scores.

Finally, the last element of the toolbox are the training materials, that offer LCSA practitioners a detailed and step-by-step learning plan, considering different levels of expertise. These materials are designed with various modules, encompassing different documents, that facilitate the practical implementation of the methodology while accommodating the diverse needs of users. They also serve a dual purpose: functioning both as self-learning material and a training package for interested parties.

About ORIENTING project

ORIENTING was a research project working to develop an operational methodology for product Life Cycle Sustainability Assessment (LCSA). Its main purpose was to integrate a life cycle approach that included

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the analysis of environmental, social and economic impacts, with the inclusion of indicators for circularity and criticality.

The project participants covered the entire value chain of life cycle evaluations and provided a critical mass of expertise and excellence in key areas. The partners were Aclima, Anthesis, BASF, Ecoinnovazione, Ecoinvent, Ecopreneur.eu, Eifer, Fraunhofer, Leiblein, PRé, Solana, Stora Enso, Tecnalia, Ternua Group, Universiteit Gent, University for the Creative Arts and VTT Teknologian Tutkimuskeskus.

ORIENTING was funded under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Framework Programme, one of the biggest EU Research and Innovation programmes ever. The project started on the 1st of November 2020 and ran for 42 months with an overall budget of 5,997,339 euros.

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