

Influencing the future development of lifecycle analysis in Europe

Chemistry Innovation has made a major contribution to CALCAS (*Coordination Action for innovation in Life Cycle Analysis for Sustainability*) - a pan-European project financed by the Sixth Framework Programme of the European Commission with a budget of €1.6 million. The objective of the project was to review current paradigms in lifecycle assessment (LCA) methods and make recommendations for future EU funded research to develop methods that will suit the needs of end-users from industry, policy makers and NGOs.

As a key partner in SusChem UK, Chemistry Innovation provided valuable input to CALCAS by representing the interests of the SusChem partners as well as industrial companies, in the development of new sustainability assessment methodologies.

Principal activities involved interviews with a wide range of industrial end-users to understand the way they used LCA based tools and information and to identify how they wished to see tools developed to meet their current and future requirements. This activity provided key industrial input to the CALCAS consortium which was largely made up of academic experts from across the European Union member states.

Interviews were under-taken with a variety of companies in the UK chemistry-using industries including Dow, Boots, GlaxoSmithKline, Marks & Spencer, InterfaceFlor, Innospec and Unilever. Input was also gathered from Defra - the UK Government Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, and the sustainability NGO 'Forum for the Future'.

Feedback from this research activity indicated a clear need for industry to have robust Life Cycle Analysis tools with a simple interface.

A spectrum of lifecycle tools and information is needed along a development process from design rules of thumb, to quantified data on end products but all these need to be related to the same methodology.

The standardisation of data collection methods and communication along value chains was also seen as vitally important for encouraging shared tackling of hot-spots. This issue is particularly important for the chemical industry which is at the beginning of such supply chains.



CALCAS - co-ordinating action and innovation

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The 3-year project commenced in September 2006 with the aim of reviewing current state of the art in lifecycle analysis (LCA) and how to link European research capabilities and expertise in this area to make them more effective. Attention was focused on 'broadening and deepening' current LCA methods to encompass a greater range of sustainability aspects beyond current environmental metrics. www.calcasproject.net

Further information on Life Cycle Analysis and the published outputs of the CALCAS project can be found on Chemistry Innovation's Sustainable Technologies Roadmap at: www.chemistryinnovation.co.uk/roadmap/sustainable/roadmap.asp?id=346