

FEEDBACK FROM THE 2011 LCA CONFERENCE

The [avniR] platform organised its first International conference on Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) 3 and 4 November 2011 in Lille, France. The event brought together 280 participants from more than twenty countries, making it the biggest ever bilingual event on life cycle thinking.

One of the main reasons for the conference's success was the focus on how life cycle assessment and life cycle thinking is applied for strategic decision making. Halfway between a business seminar and scientific symposium, the LCA conference was equally relevant to large companies, SMEs, researchers, local authorities, institutions and leading international experts.

Other key to success: linking "think global" with "act local". The [avniR] LCA platform is a collaborative project of the not-for-profit cd2e, who has fostered eco-enterprise development in Northern France for 10 years. The strength of [avniR] is its ability to bring together regional actors to work together on LCA and its applications in eco-design and environmental labelling. The Regional Council, chambers of commerce, business clusters and universities are all actively involved in the platform's projects, including the organisation of this conference. This is an innovative approach that has attracted interest from local organisations in other parts of the world that want to create a similar dynamic in their regions, but also international organisations working on a global scale such as the UNEP / SETAC Life Cycle Initiative.



2011 key figures

- 280 participants including 30% international**
- 22 countries represented**
- 60 speakers**
- 4 strategic sessions**
- 6 sectorial workshops**
- 30 scientific papers presented**
- Over 85% of participants satisfied**
- 92% plan to attend 2012 LCA Conference**



Conference Objectives

- Raise awareness of the importance of life cycle thinking.
- Share experiences and create a bridge between companies and researchers.
- Bring together international LCA actors to benefit from their life cycle thinking vision and experiences.
- Showcase examples of applying LCA in eco-design and environmental labelling.
- Create partnerships for further collaborative projects.

Participants

Geographical origin

Northern France	39 %
France- other regions	32 %
Europe (Excluding France)	23 %
North America	4 %
Other	2 %

Organisation type

Academic / Research	25 %
Consultant / Expert	20 %
NGO / Association	16 %
Corporates	15 %
SME	8 %
Public Authorities	7 %
Cluster / Syndicate / CCI	6 %
Journalists	3 %



2011 speakers included



A warm welcome for international guests

Certain international guests were treated to a day of site visits and networking opportunities the day preceding the conference. Twenty delegates from afar (Canada, USA, Australia, Malaysia, Israel...) and closer to home (England, Wales, Netherlands, Belgium, Norway...) were welcomed by local companies and stakeholders in innovative environmental sites:

- Electronic equipment recycling company ENVIE2E,
- Solar platform LumiWatt,
- Eco-merchant KBANE,
- Rehabilitated mine site Base 11/19, pilot site for sustainable conversion and eco-entreprise development.

The retailer Leroy Merlin also presented their environmental labelling programme. This subject was of particular interest for the delegation, as France's "grenelle" laws are driving huge market place change. A lively debate ensued, as participants shared information on initiatives in their own countries and debated the repercussions of such programmes on a global scale.



Canadian life cycle thinkers were particularly well represented, thanks to the cooperation between Northern France and Quebec led by the cd2e. With the support of FFQCD (Franco-Quebec Fund for Decentralized Cooperation) the following partners made the journey:

- Industrial Ecology Technopole (TEI),
- Industrial Ecology Transfer Center (CTTÉI),
- Interuniversity Research Centre for the Life Cycle of Products, Processes and Services (CIRAIG),
- Product Development Institute (IDP),
- Thomas & Betts,
- Phillips Lumec.

Flow on benefits*

[avnir] signed an agreement with IDP (Product Development Institute QC) and Novae In December, to launch the first Northern France "eco-design award" in 2012, in partnership with eco-design award in Quebec.



They appreciated...

- Number and enthusiasm of participants.*
- Very good organisation, warm hospitality, successful professional meetings*
- Good presentation of the vision of LCA and Eco-design today and in the future*
- Exchanges with national and international LCA actors creating opportunities for partnerships*
- Diversity of speaker profiles (large and small businesses, government, academia, consultants etc...)*
- Good mix of plenary session and workshops and sharing of best practices*
- The photography of the present knowledge: those who master for years, those who are starting and the remaining challenges (engaging SMEs, methodologies ...)*
- Good balance between presentations and professional exchanges*
- The quality and variety of speakers*
- The relevance of the subjects and the dynamism of organisation*
- The international dimension*



I really enjoyed meeting new people, exchanging ideas, sharing experiences (even outside of the workshops and presentations), and the possibilities of new projects arising from it.

Technical Partners



Side events

[avnir] organised also two major side events to complete the conference program:

Eco-Invent Training



Ecoinvent, the Swiss Centre for Life Cycle Inventories, provided free training on "ecoEditor for ecoinvent" on Wednesday 2nd November. This new software is used by data providers to create, edit and critically review datasets. The software enables the upload of datasets to the ecoinvent database. This was the first time the training was offered in the French language in Europe.

Twenty French and Belgian experts attended training to learn the new features and understand how to correct an existing dataset.



French - International Life Cycle Exchange Forum with the UNEP / SETAC Life Cycle Initiative

Co-hosted by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and The Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC), the Life Cycle Initiative is the most important global forum to promote the implementation of life cycle thinking.

The LCA conference was chosen for this invitation only forum of French and international experts and representatives from the public and private sector. The aim was to discuss relevant developments in the area of life cycle approaches for product sustainability (especially the role of Environmental Product Declarations and Product Category Rules) and to inform the strategy for the next phase of the Life Cycle Initiative.

Flow on benefits*

[avnir] has been commissioned to facilitate the development of the next strategy of the UNEP / SETAC Life Cycle Initiative.

* tell us about the benefits from your participation at the LCA conference
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The 2nd LCA conference will be held 6th and 7th November 2012 in Lille.
More information at www.avnir.org,

