

SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

INTERNATIONAL  PAPER

EHS & Sustainability

What is Life Cycle Assessment?

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) is a method for evaluating every step in the life cycle of a product or process – from the creation of raw materials to final disposal – to determine its potential environmental impacts. LCAs can help organizations understand and improve the environmental impact of a single product or enhance the environmental performance of a company.

A Life Cycle Assessment includes the following steps:

- Establishing goals and defining study boundaries
- Collecting and validating data
- Modeling and evaluating the process
- Interpreting and summarizing results

What is the Value of a LCA?

An LCA allows businesses to evaluate projected environmental impacts of their products and processes to determine ways they can reduce their environmental footprint consistent with other business objectives. It also gives businesses the ability to share information with their customers to help them make purchasing decisions consistent with their environmental goals.

LCA vs. Other Tools and Calculators

International Paper prefers LCAs because they provide a comprehensive, data-based and transparent approach to evaluating products and processes, which eliminates the subjectivity and bias associated with some tools and calculators. Other tools for evaluating products and processes can be narrowly focused and may not always result in an accurate or balanced analysis.

Our company supports the following standard principles and practices for implementing LCAs:

- Use as a decision support tool and not the only decision-making tool
- Methods should be based on the ISO 14040 Standards, which are internationally recognized and agreed upon by numerous experts in the field
- Analyses should be fully transparent and available to the public if associated with claims
- An assessment for public use should be peer reviewed as recommended by ISO Standards

How is Our Company Using LCAs?

By using LCA methods, International Paper is able to provide our customers with accurate information about our products. This enables customers to find opportunities to reduce the “footprint” of their operations and choose materials that are consistent with their environmental goals. Therefore, we are contributing to customer improvement initiatives and increased insight into their supply chain. In addition, LCA data can be used to discover areas for internal process innovation. Our company will conduct assessments that comply with applicable ISO Standards.

We have developed protocols for using LCA internally and have partnered with a world-class LCA services provider to further develop our internal skills. Our company LCA efforts currently include:

- A completed pilot LCA for our Coated Paperboard business to evaluate the environmental footprint of solid bleached sulfate products for ongoing improvement, including virgin fiber and recycled content product options.
- Assisting customers with their own internal LCA studies.
- Participating in the development of data for corrugated and paperboard packaging that can be contributed to the U.S. Life Cycle Inventory (U.S. LCI) database as representative, average data for public use in LCA studies.
- Developing assessments of our Foodservice and Imaging Papers products.

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