

## **LCM Definition Study – Peer Review**

**Authors: Saur et.al – Draft Author Team**

**Initiated on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2003**

**Deadline for Comments: 9<sup>th</sup> May 2003**

### **Introduction**

The review was conducted on the basis of a series of questions relating to the form and structure of the document as well as its content and response to the outline objectives of LCM within the context of UNEP's Life Cycle Initiative.

### **The questions:**

- 1 – The structure of the Report – is it clearly laid out?
- 2 – Is it correct to state that the LCM sub-programme is putting LCA (Life Cycle Analysis) into practice?
- 3 – Are the six major aims (page 4) formulated too much in favour of supporting LCA as the critical tool?
- 4 – Is the state of the art regarding LCM clear and understandable?
- 5 – What is your impression and evaluation of the user needs survey. Is the overview/summary of the findings valid?
- 6 – Are the important themes (topic areas) identified on page 21 reflecting the outcome of the user needs survey?
- 7 – What is your impression of the sections from 3.1 through to 3.4? Do they follow logically or should they be: better integrated into the report, repositioned or used as a background paper to be added as an annex?
- 8 – The work plan is outlined on page 59. What is your view on the nature and scope of what is intended to implement the topic areas (page 21)?

The questions were responded to based on a revised draft document circulated on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2003. In all around 17 responses were received – mostly focused on questions asked. In addition, a number of reviewers responded by sending proposed drafting changes linked to the questions. Some also offered general comments relating to the potential users and audiences of LCM

For the purposes of this report, only a general overview of responses to the questions is given. The detailed responses and text suggestions will be forwarded to the draft author team leader for use, as appropriate in the re-drafting.

### **1 – The structure of the Report – is it clearly laid out?**

The general answer to this question seemed to be that the table of contents was clear enough but that the actual content was confusing – especially with respect to chapter 3.1 which the majority of those responding felt should be the “meat” of the study report. There was a further comment regarding 3.1 which

stated that it read like a separate element and was not fully integrated into the document. Other comments concerned suggestions for presenting the summary points for each section and also editing comments. A final useful comment here is the need for a glossary of all acronyms and terms used.

**2 – Is it correct to state that the LCM sub-programme is putting LCA (Life Cycle Analysis) into practice? (see page 4)**

The majority of reviewers feel that this is not what LCM is about and feel this section needs to be amended to clearly distinguish LCM from LCA or to place them in their proper contexts. LCA cannot be the only tool to support LCM.

**3 – Are the six major aims (page 4) formulated too much in favour of supporting LCA as the critical tool?**

The views of the reviewers on this question are more or less divided in response to this question. Reformulation is suggested perhaps by changing LCA to LCM or by some better formulation which relates LCM to the application of life cycle thinking in decision making.

**4 – Is the state of the art regarding LCM clear and understandable?**

The majority of reviewers felt that this aspect of the study (section 1.2) was clear but one or two reviewers expressed the view that it may be difficult in practice to build LCM as concept that would lead to common views on Life Cycle Thinking between policy makers and industry. This section could do with a glossary as there are numerous acronyms and terms which require explanation to the lay person.

**5 – What is your impression and evaluation of the user needs survey. Is the overview/summary of the findings valid?**

The overall view of the reviewers was that the survey cannot be used to support valid findings. It is at best, a summary of opinions from a limited number of respondents (e.g. an over emphasis on Europe). It should therefore be treated with the utmost caution. From the point of view of the definition study, therefore, it should be either deleted or greatly reduced in extent. It is suggested that a further user needs survey could be initiated in the future and perhaps this should be kept in mind.

**6 – Are the important themes (topic areas) identified on page 21 reflecting the outcome of the user needs survey?**

As far as the links between the themes and the user needs survey are concerned, the majority of reviewers could not respond or felt that it was not possible to link the two. However, the themes identified were deemed to be more or less fine – though a comment as to the attractiveness of these themes to business could be amplified.

**7 – What is your impression of the sections from 3.1 through to 3.4? Do they follow logically or should they be: better integrated into the report, repositioned or used as a background paper to be added as an annex?**

No logical follow on from the rest of the report would sum up the views of the reviewers. However, all felt that that much of section 3.1 should actually be up at the front of the report as it gives the essential “meat” of the issue/concept. Section 3.2 was regarded fine in content but 3.3 and 3.4 where both described as being too long. Indeed, the whole of section 3 comprises of 30 pages – half of the report. The solutions to this where some better integration of 3 into the whole report with specific detailed areas (e.g. the challenge for developing countries) being either annexed or put into boxes with grey background.

**8 – The work plan is outlined on page 59. What is your view on the nature and scope of what is intended to implement the topic areas (page 21)?**

The general view was that the broad work plan as outlined, was satisfactory. However, it could be made better or at least more responsive to the topic areas if it were set out as work packages with clear goals and deliverables. The schedule of events/workshops could then be linked in as actions or deliverables on this basis. A suggestion was made to clearly develop a schedule of events and workshops so that people could plan accordingly. The proposed topic area four should be renamed “information exchange in the value chain”.

**Conclusions**

The definition study on LCM was always going to be an ambitious and daunting exercise and the fact that there is a draft study for the Peer Review Group to offer criticism and advice on is a credit to the entire author team. This work has already taken us somewhat down the road and it is clear from the comments of the reviewers that there is a genuine commitment there to developing further the concept and eventually practice of LCM. But there is a lot to do in terms of reaching consensus on what we want to use LCM for.

It is hoped that the draft author team can now proceed to re-draft the document for posting on the UNEP LCI web site over the summer so that the work plan and specific initiatives to further our development of LCM can be advanced.