

EVENT SUMMARY
***Advancing Sustainability through Life Cycle Approaches:
Empowering the MENA Region***
19/09/2023

Introduction

The webinar “*Advancing Sustainability through Life Cycle Approaches: Empowering the MENA Region*” held on September 19th from 13.00-15.00 (GMT+3) revealed the importance of creating a local regional community in MENA region which fosters change through LCA.

The introductory phase of the meeting, shed light on the following:

- Following an introduction to the Life Cycle Initiative, **Llorenç Milà i Canals** described the various tools provided by the Secretariat, which aim at supporting organizations in the application of LCT. In particular, he stressed the importance of SCP-HAT (SCP-Hotspot Analysis Tool), a powerful tool with potential use in updating NDCs. He then introduced the need for capacity building and its relevance within the LCA sphere. In this regard, enabling the conditions for the latter to occur is primal, ultimately bringing people together and allowing application of policies based on a collaboration on sustainable consumption and production.
- Next, **Dr. Mahmoud Fathallah**, acknowledging the many environmental challenges the Arab countries are experiencing, disclosed the multiple efforts that are currently being made in stakeholder and organization engagement to address the latter. He thus recognized that initiatives such as this webinar are essential in advancing towards mainstreaming LCA in the region.
- **Dr. Abeer Sadek** walked us through the importance of ISO standards and how they represent invisible threads of safety, quality, efficiency, and innovation. In regards of LCA specifically, Dr Abeer Sadek showcased how through ISO 14000 series, industries are taking advantage of the standards in taking informed decisions.

Session 1

The speakers in this session addressed current progress and prospects in LCA in the MENA region. In particular, it explored the existing initiatives, methodologies, and challenges in incorporating LCA in various sectors.

- **Nydia Suppen** described the region’s capacity building not only on an academic level, but also through pilot project examples. Through these she stated of how a cement company utilized ISO 14044 to perform an impact assessment and managed to prevent spillage of fuel oil into the soil. She finally confirmed the existence of LCA expertise in the region, and the need to join forces in mutual collaboration.
- **Nahla Neeme**, outlined the role that Saint-Gobain holds, as well as its internal structure and targets. By 2030, they are aiming at having have 100% of their new products with LCA calculations, and by 2050 to have net-zero carbon solutions. Ms. Neeme concluded by explaining the difference between LCA and EDP and how the latter is a third-party verification version of the former. All in all, their numbers speak clearly: for this year their total targeted LCAs count as being 74, whilst the EDPs as 72.

- **Rima Manneh** chronicled LCA approaches in Lebanon from 2011 to date. The latter showed how it has grown steadily until 2020, to then boost from 2021 onwards, resulting in the launch of an LCA center at the University of Balamand. She also detailed LCA approaches in Academia and the Industry, the latter carried out as research projects in the academic sector. Ms. Manneh urged for more collaboration with the industry sector and continuous development of LCT techniques.

Session 2

This session explored the need of forging collaborative pathways and the network's vital role in advancing critical LCA capacities. Both the panelists and network representatives have highly contributed to the discussion as follows:

- **Mohamed Tawfic Ahmed** analyzed LCA's critical role in environmental management systems. In this regard, he highlighted the strong need for implementing LCA as an integral part of the results and usefulness of projects and systems.
- **Naji Tannous** reflected on the importance of building a strong business case for LCA and its related activities. To this extent, he showed Lebanon's compliance with ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, the first involved in quality of services and product, while the latest dealing with minimizing environmental footprint.
- **Naziha Hassine** showcased CITET projects using LCA. Amongst the latter, projects such as the comparison of two production methods of organic and conventional dates have been carried out. Common to all is the use of LCA in analyzing each case. CITET ongoing project, instead, namely InTex is carried out in collaboration with UNEP.
- **Claudia Peña** represented the Ibero-American network of LCA and, through her experience, was able to give specific recommendations to the MENA region. Holding some capacity was described as instrumental to level the capacities and have a unilateral approach of presenting data. Language, that is common to all, that can represent the region, and collect ambitions and needs from different countries was described as a key success factor for the Ibero- American Network.
- **Anna Wikström** briefly concluded by exemplifying how the Swedish LCA Network's core values have been the key to success in their case. Building a neutral place based on transparency, having a global perspective, a scientific base, and close collaboration with government agencies were the reason for success.

Nasser Ayoub, EDP MENA Managing Director, wrapped up the discussion by listing the next steps to build local and regional capacities and expertise. A regional LCA Network for MENA region can be key to developing these enabling conditions. He proposed structure of the regional LCA Network which included LCA centers and a collaboration amongst them. His prospects envisioned:

- a. Membership interest form, for those who want to participate in building the LCA network,
- b. Board Member Nomination Form,
- c. Refining the LCA Network Structure,
- d. Advisory Board (nominated by board members),
- e. National regional partnerships,
- f. Raising awareness among stakeholders.

All in all, the spokespeople, as well as the panelists, have made this discussion extremely instructional, setting a solid base for continuous future cooperation and collaboration.

Annex 1 Event Agenda

OPENING	
13:00 – 13:03	Welcome and Context Setting Mona Abdulghani N. Mohammed , Programme Officer, UNEP
13:03 – 13:10	Promoting Sustainable Consumption and Production through Life Cycle Approaches Llorenç Milà i Canals , Head of the Secretariat, Life Cycle Initiative, UNEP
13:10 – 13:17	Linking Lifecycle Thinking to National Strategies: Enhancing Sustainability through Integrated Decision-Making Dr. Mahmoud Fathallah , Director -EMA, League of Arab States
13:17 – 13:24	The importance of ISO 14040 and 14044 for increasing the product competition in the market Dr. Abeer Sadek , Technical & International Relations Director, Egyptian Organization for Standards & Quality (Egypt) - Member in ISO National Climate Champion network
Session 1: Advancing Life Cycle Assessment in the MENA Region: Current Progress and Future Prospects	
Objective: To explore and discuss the current progress of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) implementation in the MENA region. The session will analyze the existing initiatives, methodologies, and challenges in incorporating LCA in various sectors within MENA.	
13:24 – 13:31	Comprehensive Overview of Life Cycle Assessment in the MENA Region Nydia Suppen , Co-director EPD LATAM, Founder, Centre for LCA and Sustainable Design (South Africa)
13:31 – 13:38	Experience of Saint Gobain on using LCA for analyzing and improving products and processes Nahla Neeme , Sustainable Solutions Expert, Saint Gobain Emme (UAE)
13:38 – 13:45	Integrating Life Cycle Approaches for Environmental Impact in Lebanon Rima Manneh , LCA Center Director, University of Balamand (Lebanon)
Session 2: Forging Collaborative Pathways: Networks' Vital Role in Advancing Critical Life Cycle Assessment Capacities	
Objective: Discuss the present state and challenges of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) adoption in MENA, aiming to identify pathways for its advancement, promote sustainability, and improve environmental decision-making in the region. Diverse panelists will explore the instrumental role of networks in advancing Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) capacities and fostering collaboration to drive sustainability efforts in diverse sectors.	
13:45 – 14:35	Moderator: Mona Abdulghani N. Mohammed , Programme Officer, UNEP Panelists: Mohamed Tawfic Ahmed , Professor, Suez Canal University (Egypt) Naji Tannous (Lebanon)

	Naziha Hassine, Chief Service, CITET (Tunisia) Anna Wikström, Project Manager, Swedish Life Cycle Center (Sweden) Claudia Peña, Ibero-American Life Cycle Network (Chile)
14:35 – 14:42	Announcement of LCA Network in MENA region Nasser Ayoub, Managing Director, EPD MENA
14:42 – 15:00	Q&A Session & Closing

Annex 2 Speaker Biographies



1- **Llorenç Milà i Canals** - Head of the Secretariat, Life Cycle Initiative, UNEP

Llorenç is the Head of the Secretariat of the Life Cycle Initiative, based in Paris. His main area of expertise is the environmental assessment of products, focusing on Life Cycle Assessment and its application on the implementation of sustainable business and policy models.



2- **Dr. Mahmoud Fathallah** - Director -EMA, League of Arab States

Mahmoud Fath-Allah is an Egyptian Economist, who works as a senior economist at League of Arab States in Egypt. He has a wide range of experience in both academic and applied economic policy. He also worked for several organizations including the Ministry of Economy and Foreign Trade in Egypt, the United Arab Emirates University in UAE, UNDP, and USAID Projects.



3- **Dr. Abeer Sadek** - Technical & International Relations Director, Egyptian Organization for Standards & Quality (Egypt)

Dr. Abeer is the Technical and International Relations Director at the Egyptian Organization for Standards & Quality in Egypt. She is a professional senior candidate with over 20 years of experience in Quality infrastructure pillars & activities. She is also a member of the ISO National Climate Champion network.



4- **Nydia Suppen**, Co-director EPD LATAM, Founder, Centre for LCA and Sustainable Design (South Africa)

Nydia Suppen is the Co-director of EPD LATAM and the Founder of the Centre for LCA and Sustainable Design in South Africa. She is a global trainer in environmental footprinting following the ISO international standards. She has more than 25 years of experience doing LCA studies.



5- **Nahla Neeme**, Sustainable Solutions Expert, Saint Gobain Emme (UAE)

Nahla Neeme is a Sustainable Solutions Expert at Saint Gobain Emme in the United Arab Emirates. She is an Architect specializing in Sustainable Construction. She is also an Instructor Contemporary Architecture of at the *City University Lebanon*.



6- **Rima Manneh**, LCA Center Director, University of Balamand

Rima Manneh is the Director of the Life Cycle Assessment Center at the University of Balamand. She held the position of Chairperson of the Chemical Engineering Department at UOB from 2019 to 2022. Her research focuses on environmental Life Cycle Assessment for the Lebanese context.



7- Mohamed Tawfic Ahmed, Professor, Suez Canal University (Egypt)

Dr. Mohamed Tawfic is a Professor at the Suez Canal University in Egypt. He is an experienced scientist in environmental issues, with significant contributions to many of the landmark documents issued by international bodies, including UN bodies, the World Bank, the European Commission, and other regional organizations.



8- Naji Tannous, Lebanon

He has an engineering degree, MBA and Certified Financial Analyst, with professional experience spanning 43 years, of which 19 years in the construction sector and since the year 2000 as an independent environmental performance consultant mainly as a resources efficiency and cleaner production assessor in the building and industrial sectors, as well as designer of renewable energy systems and LCA practitioner.



9- Naziha Hassine, Chief Service, CITET (Tunisia)

Naziha Hassine, General Engineer and Head of the Department at the International Center for Environmental Technologies of Tunis (CITET) and Third Party Auditor-IRCA-ISO 14001-TUV Rheinland, has more than 23 professional experience. She is responsible for Setting, managing, and monitoring national and international cooperation projects.



10- Anna Wikström, Project Manager, Swedish Life Cycle Center (Sweden)

Anna Wikström is a project manager at the Swedish Life Cycle Center, where she has also been the Acting director several times. Anna is managing work- and expert groups, initiating research projects, and providing courses, communication, and networking activities. Anna holds a Master of Science in Environmental Economics.



11- Claudia Peña, Ibero-American Life Cycle Network (Chile)

Claudia is an experienced Director of Sustainability with a demonstrated history of working in the mining & metals industry. She is a strong community and social services professional skilled in Sustainable Development, ISO 14000-series, MFA, Industrial Ecology, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Sustainable Business.



12- Nasser Ayoub, Managing Director, EPD MENA

Prof. Nasser Ayoub is the Managing Director of EPD MENA, Co-founder and CEO of EPD Egypt, UNFCCC Roster of Experts Member, an accredited EPD Verifier, a Senior Lead Environmental Consultant, and a Certified LCA Professional. Dr. Ayoub has more than 25 years of comprehensive academic and professional experience in seven different countries (Holland, Japan, Saudi, Qatar, USA, and Kuwait).