Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of the Environment,
Transport, Energy and Communications DETEC

Federal Office for the Environment FOEN
Economics and Environmental Monitoring Division

Role and position of the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment regarding Harmonisation and Environmental Declaration of Products

LCA Discussion Forum DF56

09.09.2014

Agenda

- **LCA-Harmonisation**
  - Starting point
  - Contributions FOEN
  - Policy needs
- **Environmental Information on Products**
  - Actual state
  - Political mandate: Green Economy Action Plan
  - Participation in the Single market for green Products pilot phase
- **Summary**

Harmonisation of LCA

Starting point

Question:

Are Environmental Declarations of Products and Organisations the way to Harmonise LCAs?

Position FOEN:

From our perspective they are not the way to harmonise LCA, because

- they are an application of LCA for specific (policy) objectives

- the restrictions which have to be defined in programmes and PCRs might not be useful for other objectives or decision situations.

But Environmental Declarations of Products require a harmonisation at a specific level focused on the objective.
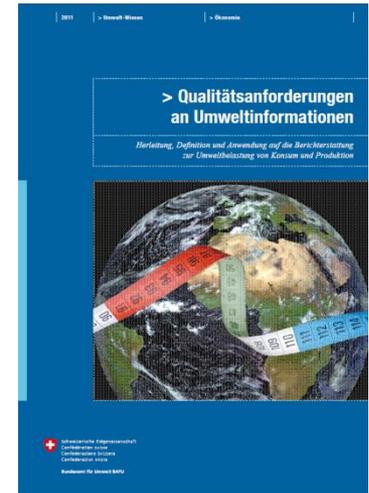
FOEN participation in LCA harmonisation

Requirement:

Harmonisation initiative should fulfil the "true and fair view" criteria

Participation/Contribution:

UNEP/SETAC Life cycle initiative

Intergovernmental Dialogue on Quality data availability for policy making

Single market for green products pilot phase

http://www.bafu.admin.ch/publikationen/publikation/01623/index.html?lang=en

Policy needs: Databases

- Needs
  - accepted generic LCI (relevant, reliable, consistent and transparent)
  - quality requirements for product specific LCI
- Possible harmonisation
  - consistent terminology
  - data documentation
- Frame for the Harmonisation
  - UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Initiative

Policy needs: LC approaches

- Needs
  - Adaptable approaches which could be used in different decision situations
  - International standards with a high flexibility
- Potential contribution to harmonisation
  - Limited as consensus has priority
  - Consideration of stakeholder needs in revisions
- Frame for the Harmonisation
  - International Organization for Standardization

Policy needs: LCIA

- Needs
  - A set of recommended environmental impact category indicators would be highly appreciated
  - Normalisation and weighting should also be addressed
- Frame for the Harmonisation
  - UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Initiative
  - ILCD recommendation as useful first step (weighting missing)

Policy needs: Specific programmes and activities

- Needs
  - appropriate LC approaches for specific policy objectives
  - harmonisation which allows to achieve the objective
- Needs (Environmental Information on Products)
  - consistent Product and Sector Category Rules,
  - reliable data
- Possible harmonisation
  - Depends the objective/activity and on national policies
- Frame for the Harmonisation
  - multi- or international initiatives

Environmental Declaration of Products

Actual state

- no or incomplete environmental information for many products

- products causing high environmental burdens can not be identify

- Risk of „Greenwashing"

- Consumers express a need for clear and reliable environmental information

- Consumers are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products, if they are convinced

Political mandate: Green Economy Action Plan

- Federal Council adopted the action plan with 27 measures on the March 8, 2013

- Improving resource efficiency of **consumption and production** one of the 4 core areas

  - Measure 4: Improvement of environmental information on products

  - Measure 5: Environmental information on product ranges

  - Measure 8: Voluntary agreements with the economy concerning products

Participation in the SMGP Pilot Phase

Why does FOEN participate in the EU SMGP Pilot Phase:

- Too many initiatives might foil the aim of Environmental Information on Products.

- Same goal: Increase market transparency with comprehensive and reliable information on the environmental performance of products

- Same principles: transparency, reliability, completeness, comparability, etc.

Participation in the SMGP Pilot Phase

How is FOEN involved in the EU SMGP Pilot Phase:

- Technical secretariat member in 4 Pilots:

  - With financial contribution: T-Shirt, Coffee

  - Without financial contribution: Household detergents, Non-leather shoes

- Member of the Steering Committee

- Member in the Technical Advisory Board

Participation in the SMGP Pilot Phase

Harmonisation within the SMGP pilot phase:

- although the PEF-Method is very detailed it leaves room for decisions and interpretation

- large diversity of approaches in the different Pilots

- further alignment needed

    - allocation (e.g. WG Cow)

    - between PEFCRs from the same sector

- Possible harmonisation at a later stage

    - benchmarking and definition of classes of environmental performance

    - background system

Summary

LCA Harmonisation

- FOEN supports harmonisation initiatives
- Harmonisation shall take place at several levels
- An overall harmonisation will hardly be reached because national policies may entail different LCA approaches

Environmental Declarations of Products

- FOEN has the mandate/task to work in this field
- unilateral approaches are not effective
- SMGP pilot phase is very ambitious
- further alignment/harmonisation might be needed

Questions?

Thank you for your attention.

Frank Hayer
Scientific Officer

Federal Office for the Environment FOEN
Economics and Environmental Monitoring Division

frank.hayer@bafu.admin.ch
www.bafu.admin.ch