



SCORELCA



SCORELCA project: investigation of status and needs for social LCA

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SCORELCA Project

- Project “**Social LCA, Sustainable development, CSR: state of research? What are the methodological needs?**”
 - November 2016 – November 2017
 - Funded by SCORELCA (FR)
 - Team project: the University “G. d’Annunzio”, Ecoinnovazione, EcoAct
- Application-oriented research
 - Can S-LCA be used today in a practical way and how?
- Expected output
 - Roadmap of recommendations
 - Inputs to the S-LCA Guidelines update



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Background and research questions

- Increasing market pressure and awareness on sustainability issues (environmental footprints, responsible research and innovation, sustainable finance)
- The life cycle assessment is recognised as a robust metric for the assessment of the environmental performances (Better Regulation toolbox)
- Building upon the experience in the LCA field, and considering the developments that have been occurring in the S-LCA, SCORELCA members were interested in investigating:

- **to what extent the S-LCA methodology can provide different/additional information compared to the existing approaches for the assessment of the social aspect**
- **the applicability of S-LCA** (perception of S-LCA as an academic approach)
- **in which direction the methodology should be developed for increasing its robustness**

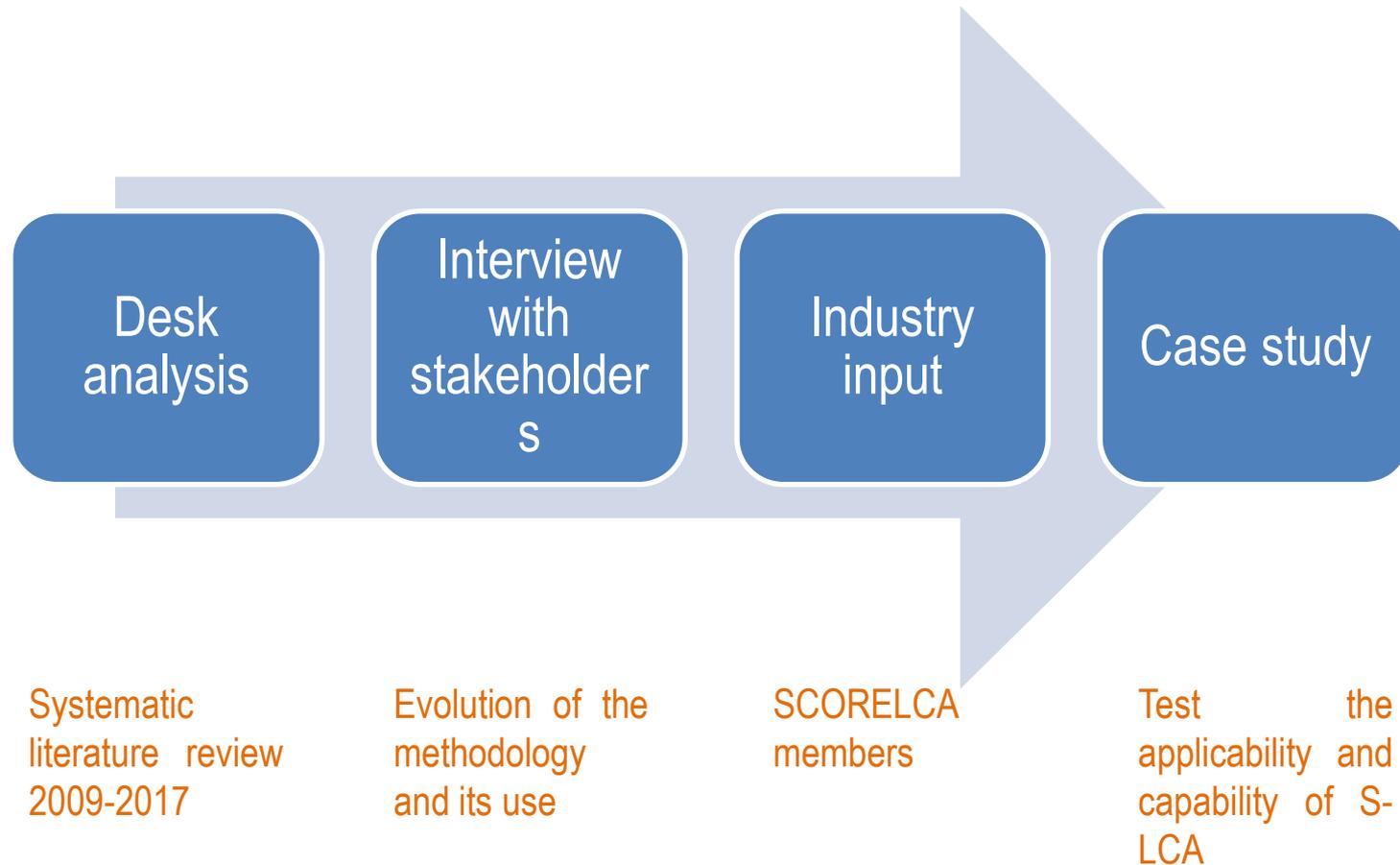
Outcomes of the research

- Identification of the *status*, *developments*, *opportunities* and *limitations* of S-LCA
- *Roadmap of practical recommendations*, i.e., essential steps to be taken for further developing the methodology and its uptake, as a decision-support tool
- Identify the methodological gaps and the work needed to ensure the *practical use and evolution of S-LCA in the framework of a Life Cycle Sustainability Assessment*

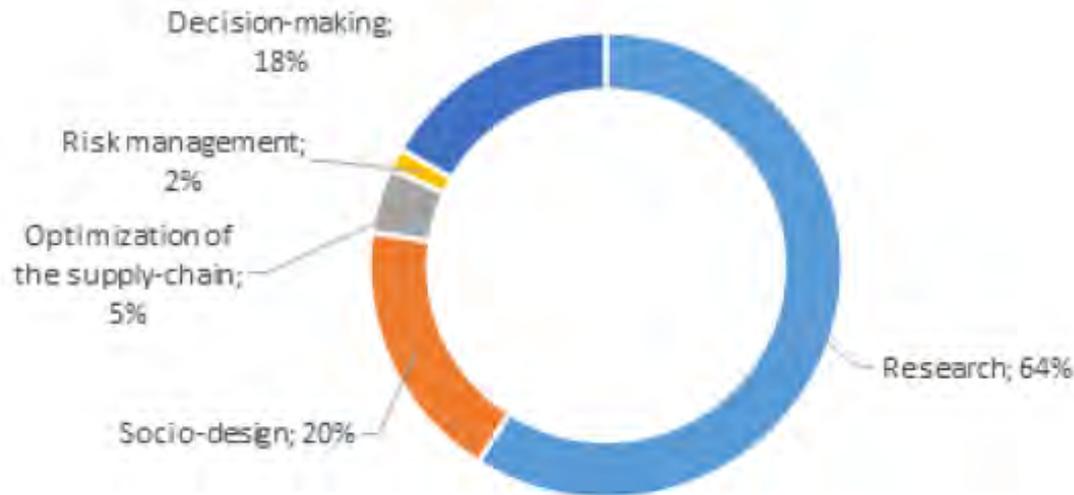
What do we want to achieve?

A participative (multi-stakeholders), practical and robust methodology that provides transparent and science-based information on social and socioeconomic performance of a product throughout its entire life cycle, able to support the decision process.

Research method



Status of S-LCA– Which uses for S-LCA?



Research (64%)

- **Development of assessment methods and frameworks** for SLCA (39%);
- Applying UNEP/SETAC Guidelines for SLCA (20%)
- Putting an existing framework into practice (15%)
- **Identifying the social hotspots** of the product/systems analysed (17%)

Socio Design (20%)

- Sectors: **Construction, cosmetics, food industry, electronics industry, waste, sports industry, energy, automotive industry, heavy industry...**

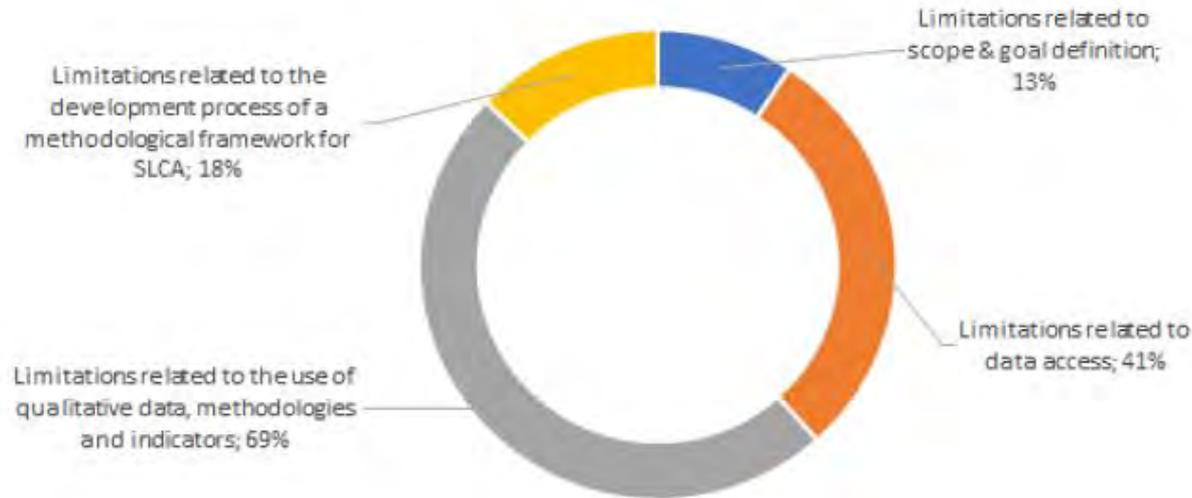
Decision Making (18%)

- **Provide recommendations** at the company and policy level;
- Provide useful findings for better informed decision making
- **Compare products, systems** or different scenarios to each other to determine which products/systems/scenario are the most sustainable and should be promoted

Optimization of the supply chain (5%)

- Help the industry to **identify the issues** and then to improve the processes and equipment towards more sustainable alternatives
- Identify options for **reducing potential negative impacts** through manufacturing in global value chains

Status of S-LCA - Limits of S-LCA



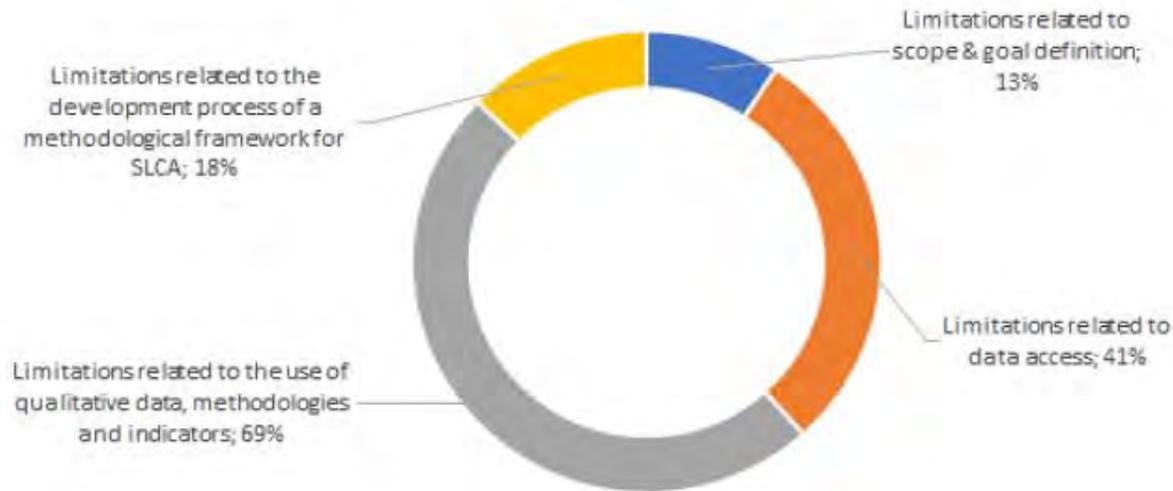
Use of qualitative data, methodologies and indicators (69%)

- The **selection, quantification, weighting** and comparison of social indicators
- **Lack of indicators** covered by the available databases
- Integrating **qualitative data** into the assessment
- **Aggregating negative and positive** impacts;

Data access (41%)

- **The lack of data**, especially at regional, sectoral level; and product-specific, leading to use generic data which raises limitations in term of data accuracy
- **Multiple tools and reporting frameworks** of the company that do not communicate and use several nomenclatures

Status of S-LCA - Limits of S-LCA



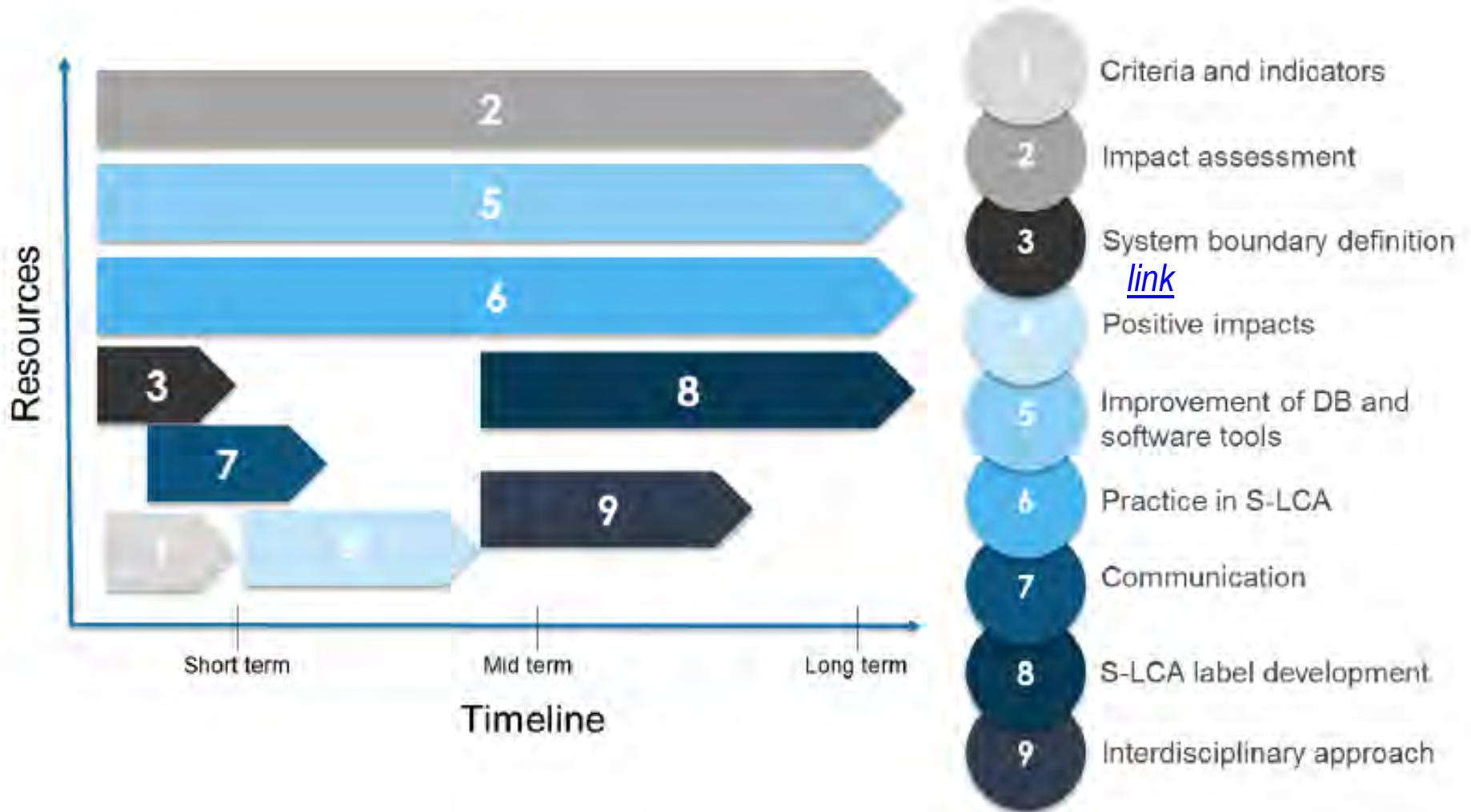
Limitations related to the development process of a methodological framework for slca (18%)

- **Lack of consensual and standardized** framework for SLCA
- Difficulty to establish a **link between ELCA and SLCA**
- The **lack of a formal presentation** of the social LCA results
- How to integrate stakeholders' needs into the assessment for making the analysis as much **context-based** as possible
- How to select the **relevant stakeholders** is not fully addressed

Goal and scope (13%)

- There is still a debate on how to set the **system boundaries**
- **Functional unit:** most of the social impacts in SLCA do not depend on, and are not proportional to physical flows
- **Cut-off criterion** which is an important issue that has not yet been defined in empirical method

Results – A roadmap for prioritizing developments



Discussion and conclusions

- Recognised the potential value of S-LCA results:
 - Enhance social performance of the concerned companies by helping them to build a targeted strategy for future development of social policies
 - Support decision-making processes that involve different stakeholders with different knowledge and background → RRI principles
 - Manage social risk thanks to the identification of the social hotspots
 - Provide structure, credibility and consistency to supply chain materiality assessment
- S-LCA developed mirroring LCA, but with important differences:
 - Linearity assumptions does not hold in S-LCA → role of thresholds
 - Social impacts and performances are tight to the context in which they occur, and to the organisation that manages them
 - Social/cultural/economic mechanisms vs environmental mechanisms

Discussion

- S-LCA still under development, but methodological and practical support is available
 - Apply scientific rigour!
- (some) Areas of development:
 - Positive impacts
 - Impact assessment – pathway approach
 - Harmonise approach to setting S-LCA studies
 - Indicators
 - Mechanisms are still poorly captured and, consequently analysed
- ~~If you can't measure it, you can't manage it~~
 - Value of the narrative approach

«It is better to make imprecise statements about unmeasurable but relevant magnitudes (use value, total utility) than to make more precise statements about the measurable but irrelevant magnitude (for evaluating total welfare) of exchange value» (Daly, 1968)



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