Call for Master's thesis

Title (working title)

Challenges and Methodological Considerations in Prioritizing Social Indicators in Social Life Cycle Assessment: Insights from Experienced Researchers

Background

Social Life Cycle Assessment (SLCA) is a valuable tool for evaluating the social impacts of products and processes across their life cycle. However, the process of selecting and prioritizing social indicators/issues in SLCA presents various challenges, methodological considerations, and complexity. The complexity arises from the diverse and often qualitative nature of social impacts, making the selection of indicators not only challenging but also subjective. An additional challenge stems from the need to align the selected indicators with the specific context, product, or process being assessed, further complicating the prioritization process. Moreover, the lack of standardized guidelines or universally accepted frameworks for indicator selection adds another layer of complexity to this prioritization step in SLCAs. Furthermore, identifying and operationalizing relevant indicators/social topics to capture the granularity of social impact while being feasible in the context of the assessment is a methodological hurdle. Therefore, a deeper understanding of the complexity and identifying different challenges in this prioritization step in SLCAs is crucial to obtain possible recommendations and optimize future SLCA procedures.

The aim of this study

To gain deeper insights into the challenges, it is imperative to examine the experiences and recommendations of researchers who have engaged in the prioritization of social indicators in SLCA. After all, the researchers are the ones who have implemented and experienced the different methods. Accordingly, this Thesis addresses the challenges associated with topic prioritization methods and methodological considerations. It draws on the experiences of researchers engaged in this crucial first step of SLCA. Therefore, the study aims to shed light on the real challenges faced by researchers and find recommendations for dealing with the complexity of prioritizing social indicators.

Methods

- Literature review
- Scientific methods (e.g., interviews, surveys, workshops)

Results

The results will provide important insights into the experiences of the various researchers in the studies and identify the challenges in implementing these prioritization methods. At best, the results will also include recommendations for studies/researchers to facilitate and improve future methodological decisions.

Requirements and general conditions

- <u>Start</u>: immediately (but flexible)
- <u>Effort</u>: Publication planned

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