

A Life Cycle Assessment of printed matter using EE-IO data: Opportunities and limitations of a combined approach

Topic: LCA application

Author: An Vercalsteren

Co-Authors: Evelien Dils, Theo Geerken

In Belgium the Federal Public Planning Agency responsible for product policy is exploring the possibilities to introduce a carbon/environmental labelling initiative for consumer products. In that context VITO is studying the environmental impact of printed matter (newspaper and periodical) using life cycle assessment.

An ISO-conform LCA study will be performed, using specific data (from private partners in the life cycle chain) as well as generic data from publicly available LCA datasources. In Flanders EE-IO tables with high resolution (117x 117) have recently been developed. Since the sectors for “printed matter” have a strong base in Flanders and as such are well-defined in the Flemish IO-tables, the potential for using EE-IO data as input for the LCA study can be explored. Part of the project is to compare the results from and efforts for performing an ISO-conform LCA versus a combined IO-LCA. For the case of printed matter this will provide insights to the offset between accuracy of results and efforts needed for data inventory.

The presentation will briefly describe the approach of the study on printed matter and will compare results of both methods (ISO conform versus combined). We will highlight opportunities and limitations of the combined IO-LCA approach as identified during this study.