PARIS GOOD FASHION

Etude Data
Résultats des interviews d'experts

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CONTEXT

Evaluating databases and the quality of their underlying data first requires aligning on their intended purpose:
- Are they going to be used to measure the impact of the industry and its individual players?
- Are they going to be used to identify the main pools of emission to focus action?
- Are they going to be used to assess the trade-offs and reduction potential of different mitigation actions?

Conversations with multiple experts across the industry reveal consensus on the following:
- While significant progress has been made in understanding the main emission pools, a more granular understanding of impacts at the level of its main segments would unlock more focused collaborative action.
- Across databases, there are specific gaps and quality issues that can hinder the effectiveness of impact calculation and of identifying precise mitigation actions.
- Finally, the use and end-of-use phases are currently poorly covered by existing databases while representing a non-negligible percentage of scope 3 emissions – CDP Scope 3 categories 11 and 12.

However, this should not lead to analysis paralysis. Certain actions are known to result in meaningful emissions reductions and waiting for exact data on abatement potential risks delaying necessary progress. A pragmatic approach is needed – one that balances investments in data precision with tangible mitigation efforts.

This raises critical questions about resource allocation: how much should a company or the industry invest in refining its understanding of its impact versus accelerating mitigation strategies? Ultimately, the goal is to use existing insights to drive action while progressively improving data systems to enable more precise and impactful decisions, potentially in that order.

SWOT

Strengths

- **Coverage**: Established databases like Ecoinvent and others provide comprehensive datasets widely used across industries.
- **Multi-criteria capabilities**: Databases like PEF and gabi allow assessments beyond carbon impact, encompassing biodiversity and other environmental factors.
- **Evolving frameworks**: tools like the Higg FEM (Facility Environmental Module) are incorporating primary data from tier 1 and 2 facilities, improving accuracy of data over time. Worldly is developing a methodology to enable easier data input into their databases, while ensuring that outliers can be identified and managed to secure the reliability and accuracy of the data.
- **Harmonisation efforts**: Initiatives like the EF 4.0 aim to standardize data formats and improve interoperability.
- **Transparency efforts**: Some actors are attempting to disaggregate data to align with real-world specifics. In addition, Ecoinvent provides transparency in its data sources.

Weaknesses

- **Data gaps**:
  - Lack of up-to-date data on emerging areas like certified materials (e.g. GOTS, RWS), regenerative cotton or biodiversity.
  - Limited data availability for new processes and innovative materials.
  - Reliance on outdated, unverifiable, or generalized secondary data ("zombie data") especially at tier 3 and 4 – particularly salient for raw materials – compromises precision of assessments and reliability for specific applications.
  - Insufficient localization of data, particularly for agricultural inputs, leading to oversimplifications.
  - Emerging topic: chemistry – for example dyes & dying – where more information on impacts is needed.
- **Fragmentation**: Variability in methodologies, assumptions, and file formats complicates comparability and harmonization between databases. This is further complicated by the lack of transparency on methodologies and assumptions in certain databases.
- **Dependency on certain providers:**
  - The high costs and licensing requirements limit usability for SMEs.
  - The almost monopoly Ecoinvent has on data can represent an economic risk for the ecosystem that relies on its data.
  - The black box model of gabi by Sphera prevents users from accessing the underlying data.
- **Variability**: although in general reasonable, there are times where the variability of impact calculation observed between databases of reference can render choosing mitigation actions more difficult for companies.

Opportunities

- **Methodological convergence**: Greater alignment between frameworks like PEF, GHG Protocol, and national databases (e.g., French vs. European approaches).
- **Integration with industry stakeholders**: Enhanced collaboration with fibre producers and manufacturers to gather primary data – like for the Higg FEM. This could be done through trust intermediaries who anonymise the primary data.

- **Expansion of scope**: Inclusion of lesser-studied materials and processes with regional granularity – like regenerative agriculture or end-of-life impacts – can significantly enrich databases.
- **AI-applications**: experts have highlighted opportunities for AI-driven data improvement, similar to pilots being run on chemical toxicity modelling, which could reduce dependency on primary data collection.
- **Simplification tools for SMEs**: Development of easy-to-use tools, such as Ecobalyse, adapted for smaller enterprises.

Threats

- **Confidentiality concerns**: Hesitation among suppliers to share sensitive industrial processes is hindering transparency and data availability.
- **Regulatory divergence**: Different national adaptations of frameworks risk creating conflicting standards. For example, the French and EU different approaches risk creating different standards – recent announcement from the EU might ensure alignment.
- **Resource intensity**: Building and maintaining reliable databases require substantial investment, both financial and human.
- **Inconsistencies**: Differences in dataset assumptions affect impact reporting, particularly between Ecoinvent, ADEME, and PEF.
- **Data flow**: Data inaccuracies in one tool propagate across the EIA landscape, affecting decision-making and public perception.
- **Supply chain complexity**: the complexity of supply chains and the significant variability of impact process to process and facility to facility impedes comprehensive impact assessment.

AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT

Transparency: How to balance data transparency and confidentiality of some industrial processes?
Some contributors emphasize full transparency in methodology and data, while others highlight the risks of exposing proprietary information.
To be discussed in interviews: how could a third-party intermediate trust and create data that provides the level of details needed for brands to make more informed decisions and impact calculation, while protecting the owner of the IP.

Harmonization standards: Divergent views on whether a universal standard (e.g., PEF) should dominate or if regional frameworks should coexist.

Cost and accessibility: How to balance database accessibility for SMEs while maintaining scientific rigor and financial viability. The ADEME took the approach to provide a simplified measurement tool with aggregated data, that allows for high level impact assessment but not precise mitigation identification.

AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Two agenda points emerge for future research:

Data quality and integrity

1. **Comparative dataset analysis**
   a. Evaluate the **differences in impact measurement between Ecoinvent, ADEME, and PEF** to quantify discrepancies for set products – could include a cotton t-shirt, a PET t-shirt and a woollen sweater.
   b. **Rationalise variations** – as possible - by evaluating the differences in baselines, assumptions and allocation rules.
2. **Primary data collection**:
   a. Explore sources of **reticence of manufacturers and suppliers to share primary data**, and mechanisms to incentivise them while safeguarding their proprietary information.
   b. Determine how **AI-driven data modelling** can supplement missing data and help the arbitrage between the need for primary and the use of secondary data, while helping to maintain the 'up to date' aspect of databases.
   c. Define processes that enable **easier submission of primary data** – to increase accuracy of databases and help updates – while ensuring quality and reliability – this could be inspired by the work from Worldly.
   d. **Increase regionalisation and specificity** of impact data, particularly for agriculture and bio-based materials.
3. **Expanding data coverage**
   a. **Put out specific calls for additional data provision,** in particular for certified materials, regenerative processes and innovative materials and for the product use and end of use phases. This can entail:
      i. The creation of a **standardized data frameworks** to evaluate product usage, washing, repair, and reuse behaviours.
      ii. The assessment of **end-of-life pathways** to improve lifecycle assessments.
   b. **Consider the impact of standardization on innovation** and whether strict data standardization might inadvertently stifle product and material innovation.

Database governance & accessibility

1. **Transparency and trust models:** Define best practices to balance data transparency with confidentiality.
2. **Harmonization framework**: Explore opportunities for aligning standards across Europe and globally, including resolving differences between PEF and GHG Protocols. In addition, evaluate alignment opportunities between environmental certifications and these methodologies to simplify eco-labelling and improve clarity for stakeholders.
3. **Governance models**: Analyse potential governance structures that balance stakeholder input, resource allocation, the dynamic update of data and the openness and accessibility of the data.
4. **Managing dependencies:** the current reliance of many -governmental – databases to private ones like Ecoinvent's can be unsustainable in the future and invite to explore alternative governance models for open data, especially in the context of

public-private partnerships to develop more accessible and non-proprietary databases.

RESOURCES
Consulted experts:
- Alliance Europeene Lin & Chanvre & Cose 361 - Marie Demaegdt & Stephane Popescu, 3 decembre
- Fairly Made - Leila Gimeno, 19 Decembre
- Decathlon – Margaux Raynal & Flavien Colin, 8 Janvier
- Lacoste – Frederic Lecoq & Steve Duhamel, 19 Decembre
- WRI & Independent Consultant - Michael Sadowski, 13 Janvier
- Apparel Impact Institute – Leonie Schmid & Bruno Carneiro, 14 Janvier
- FHCM – Pascal Morand et Leonore Garnier, automne 2024
- Ademe et Ministere : Vincent Colomb, 31 Janvier
- Glimpact: Christophe Girardier, TBC
- EU DG Environment: TBC
- Chanel – Christelle Verrier & Mathilde Bertrand, 24 Janvier
- Cascale & Worldly – Joel Mertens & JR Siegel, 7 Mars.

Literature:
Mapping the Environmental Impact Assessment Landscape in the Fashion and Textile Industries: Critical Gaps and Challenges, https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/16/19/8377

Assessing environmental impacts of a textile company using life cycle assessment approach—a case study, https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11356-024-33719-7

Is red tape strangling Europe's growth?, https://www.ft.com/content/4e8e6cde-d0ce-4f0a-a7ea-1c913d4dad50?Utm_source=chatgpt.com