

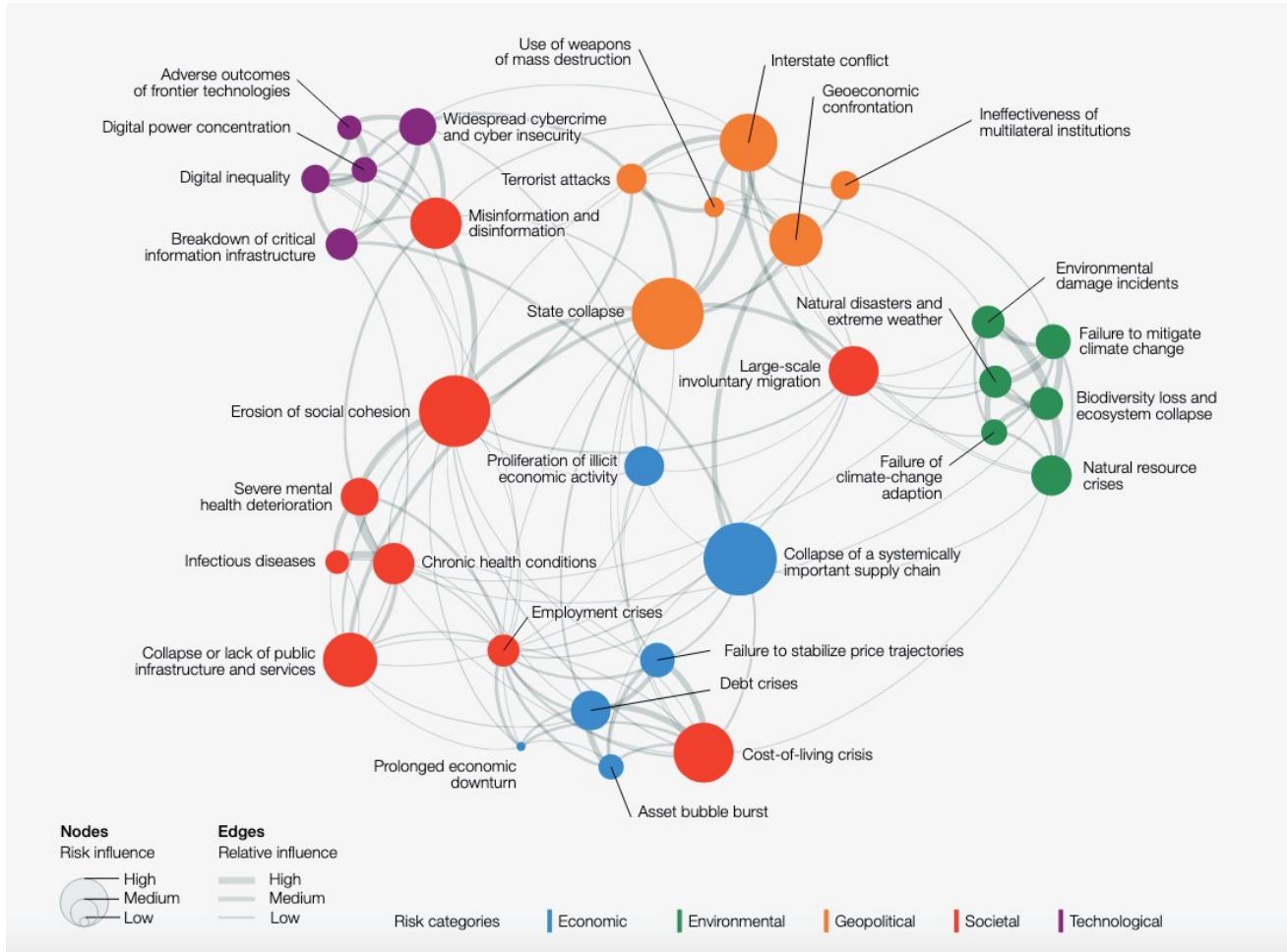
Introduction to Life Cycle Assessment and Eco-Design

Aerospace Summer School

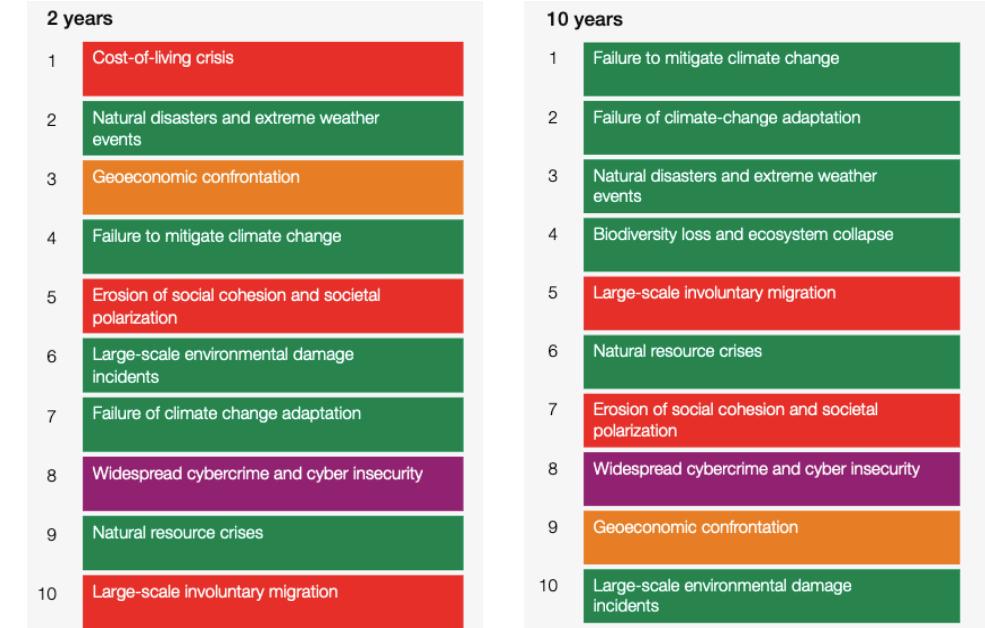
Félix POLLET – Postdoctoral researcher at ISA / ISAE-SUPAERO

July 2024

Global context: the risk of polycrises



Global risks ranked by severity
over the short & long term



Source

World Economic Forum Global Risks.
Perception Survey 2022-2023.

A transition towards more sustainable development is needed...

... As urged by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the European Green Deal, among others.



The success of this transition depends on our ability to **quantify environmental impacts**, identify hotspots, evaluate strategies, compare alternatives, unveil trade-offs, and monitor evolutions.

Course objectives

- ❑ Understand the basics of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) and its essential steps

- ❑ Gain insights through applications in aerospace
 - Explore specific case studies of LCA (at the research level)
 - Understand how LCA can be used to improve sustainability and reduce environmental impacts

Course Contents

- o Introduction
- o The 4 steps of LCA
 - Goal and scope definition
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 - Interpretation
- o Tools & Databases
- o Case studies
 - Eco-design of a drone
 - LCA of an aircraft
 - Sectoral LCA of air transport
- o Planetary boundaries
- o Conclusion and Q&A

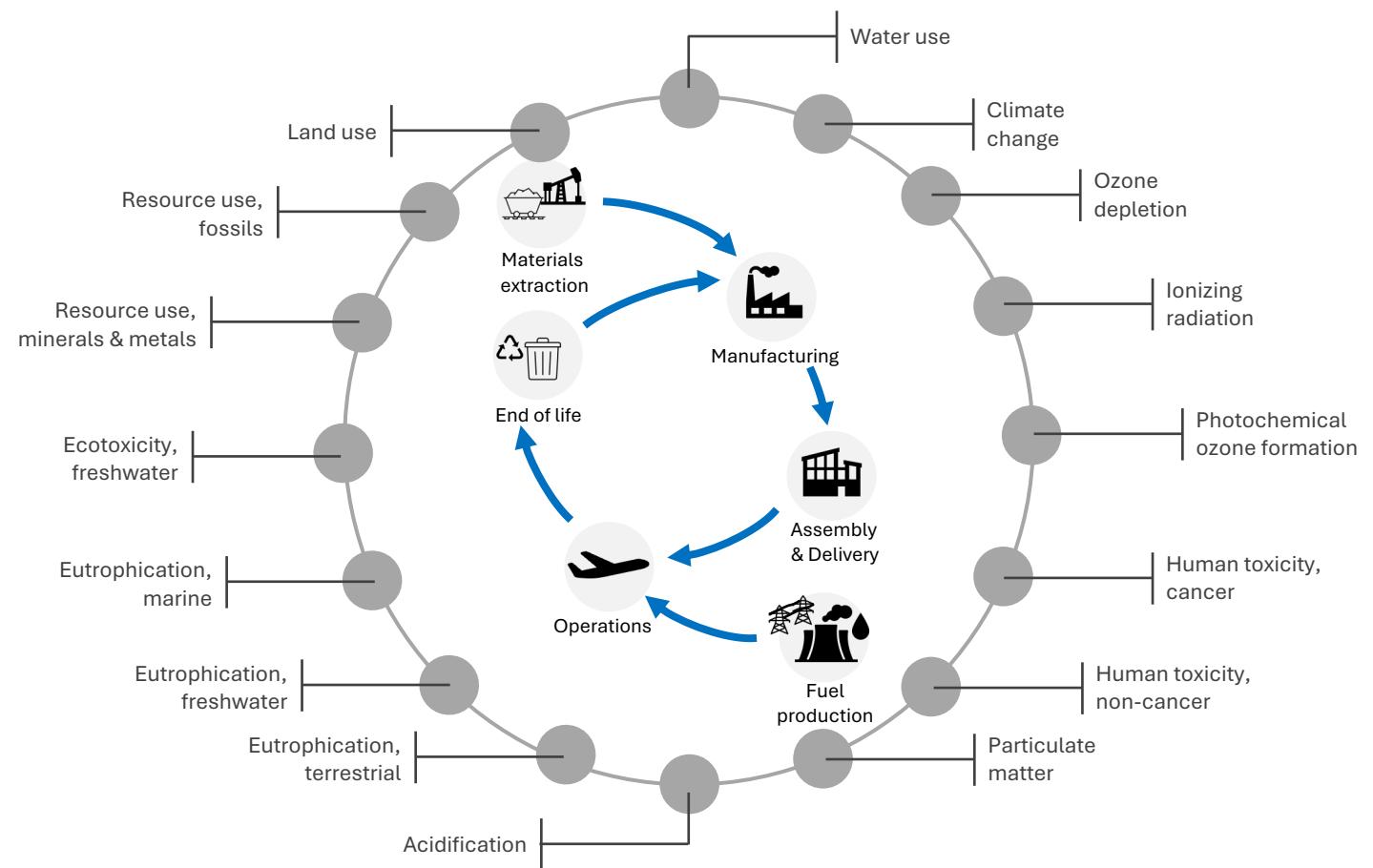
Quizz!



Take your smartphone 😊

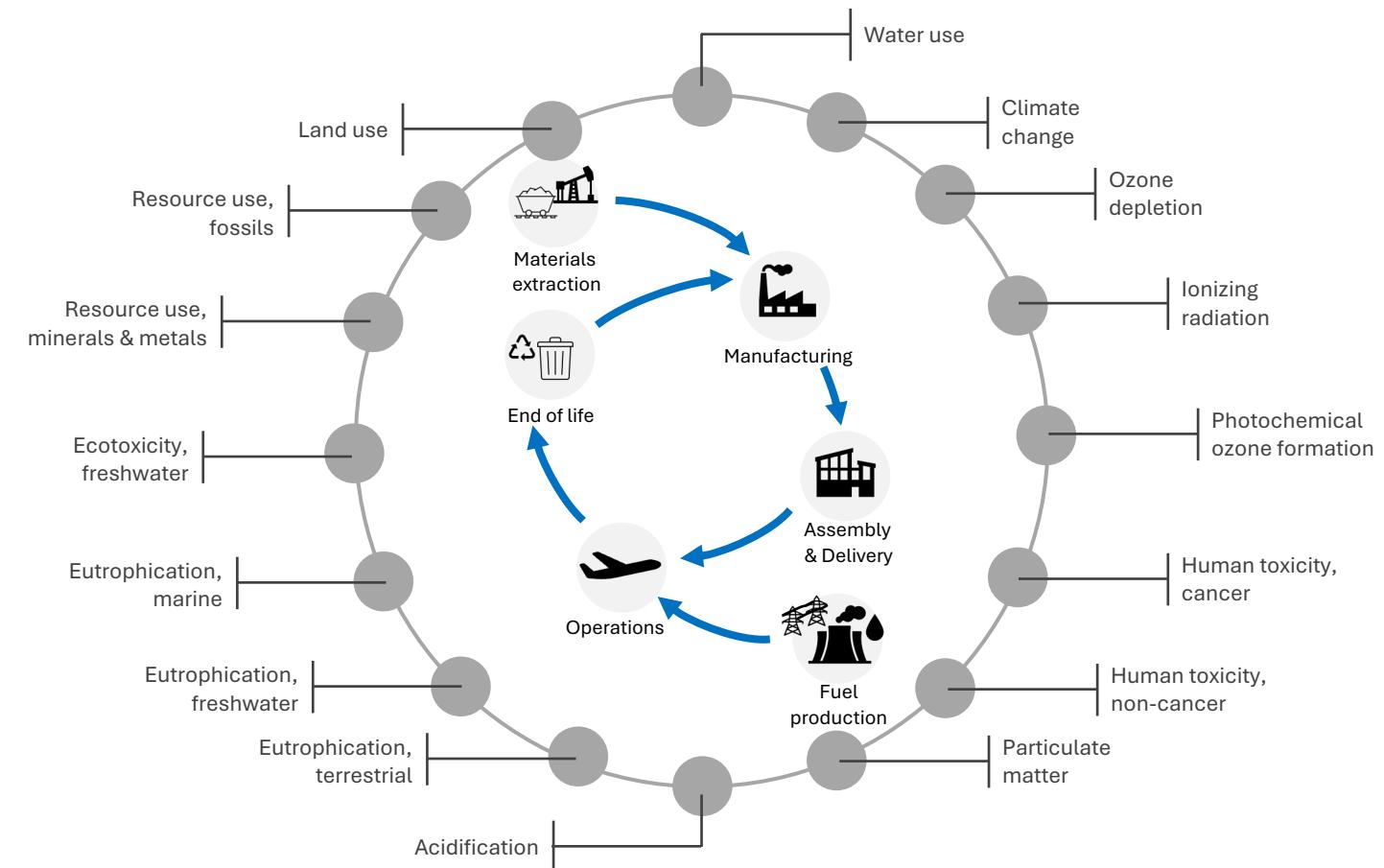
What is Life Cycle Assessment?

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) is a methodology that allows quantifying the environmental impactss of a system throughout its entire life cycle

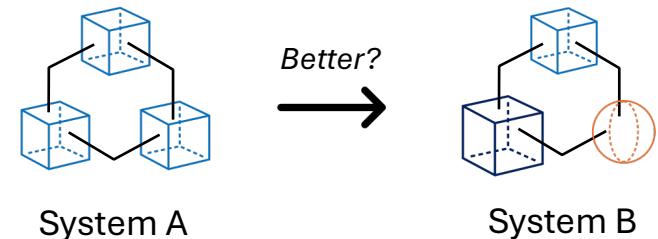


- **Standardised** (ISO 14040 – 14044)
- **Multi-stages** « cradle-to-grave »
- **Multi-criteria** : broader than climate

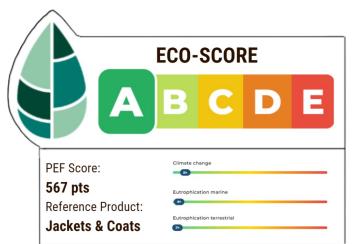
What is it used for?



- **Eco-design & decision-making**
Avoiding « burden-shifting »



- **Reporting**
→ Environmental labels & declarations
→ Comply with regulations

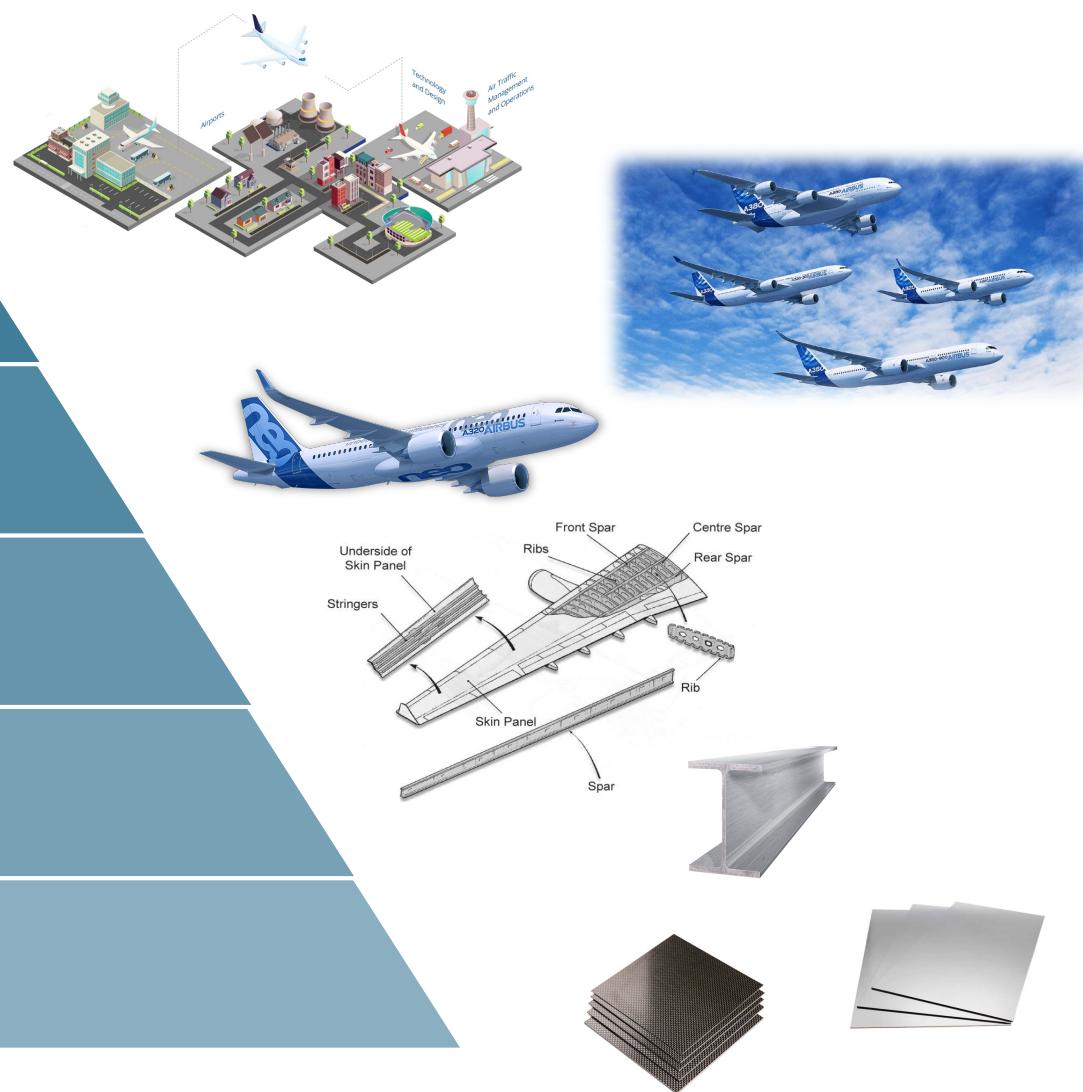
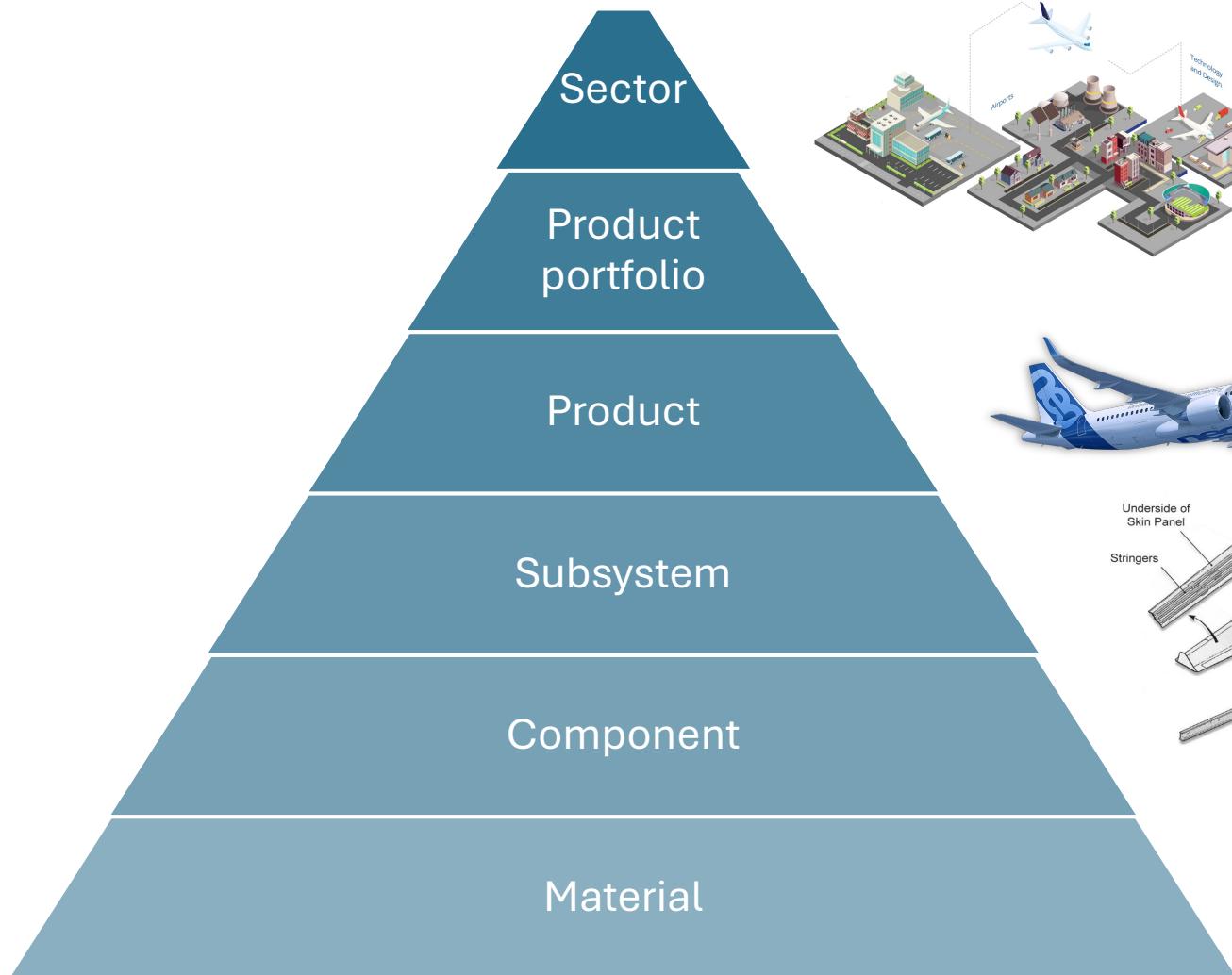


Links with policies and laws in the EU



<https://pre-sustainability.com/articles/navigating-the-sustainability-reporting-landscape-with-lca/>

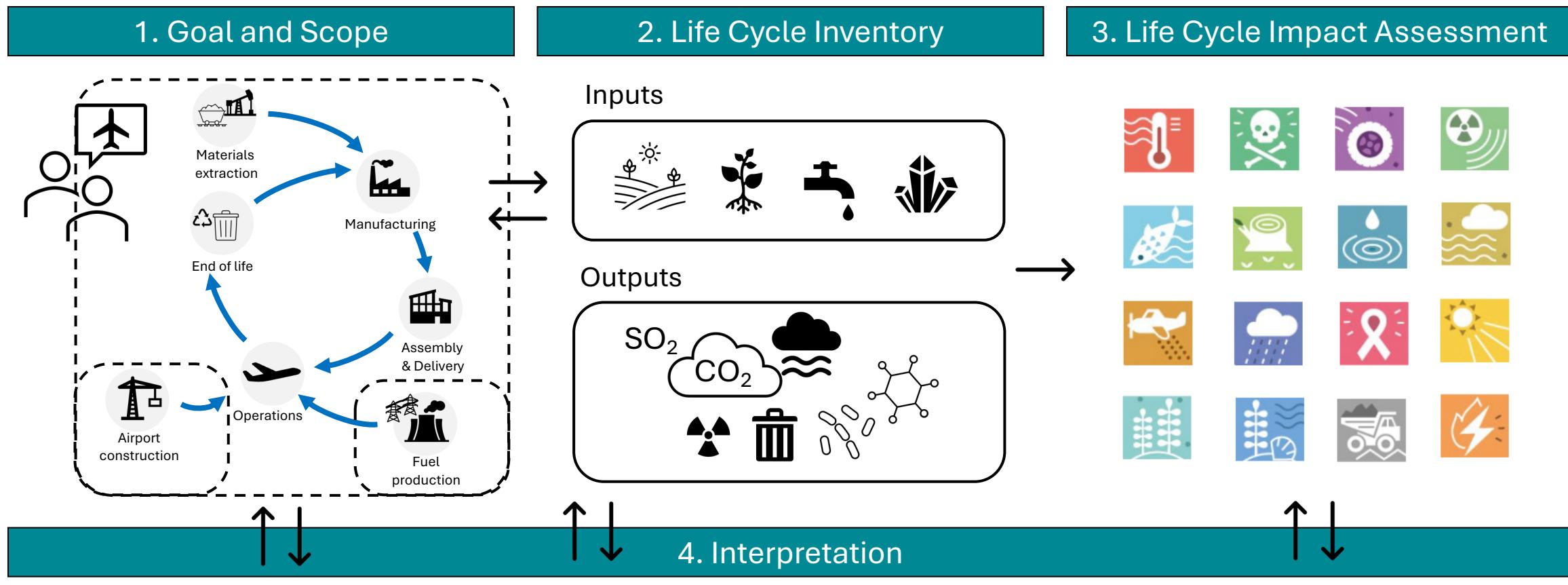
Possible levels of application



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Methodology ISO 14040 / 14044



Hotspots, Sensitivity, Uncertainties, Recommendations...

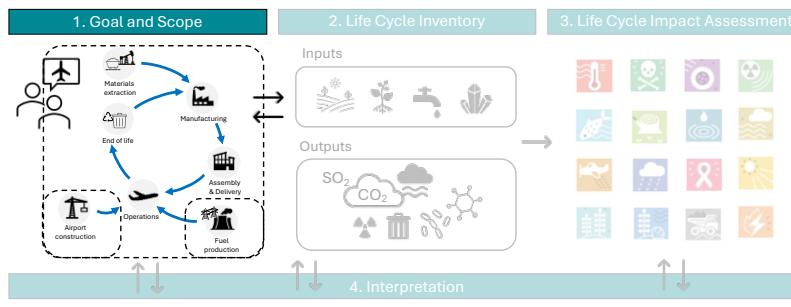


Goal & Scope definition

The first step of LCA consists of defining the **goal**, that is:

- What is the intended application
- What are the reasons for carrying out the study
- Who is the intended audience
- Whether the results are for internal use only or to be disclosed to the public

Example: « Compare several coffee machines to inform the customer on its choice. »



The **scope** of the study shall also be defined:

- The product system to be studied. *E.g. a Moka (Italian) coffee maker in aluminum (200 mL / 7 oz.)*
- The functions of the studied product or service. *E.g. to prepare coffee*
- **The Functional Unit**
- **The System Boundaries**
- The deliverable : ISO report, slides...
- Etc...

Functional Unit

The Functional Unit (FU) enables to quantify the identified functions (performance) of the product. It serves as a scaling factor for measuring the environmental footprint and allows comparisons between different products that serve the same function.

Example for a coffee machine:

"The product must enable the filling of a **cup of coffee of 80 ml (2.7 oz), 4 times a day,** with a concentration of **25% caffeine,** for **3 years.** »

What?
How much?
How well?
How long?

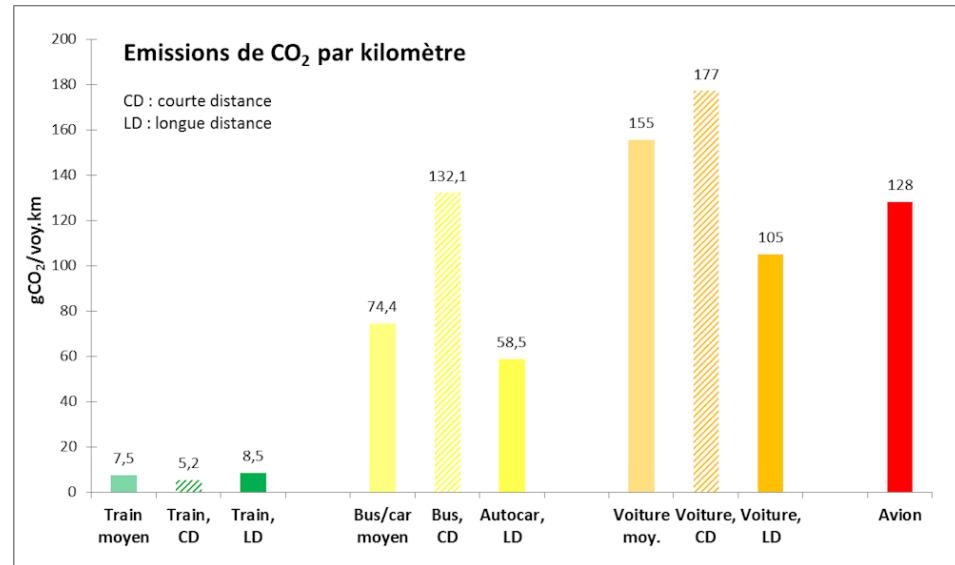


Functional Unit

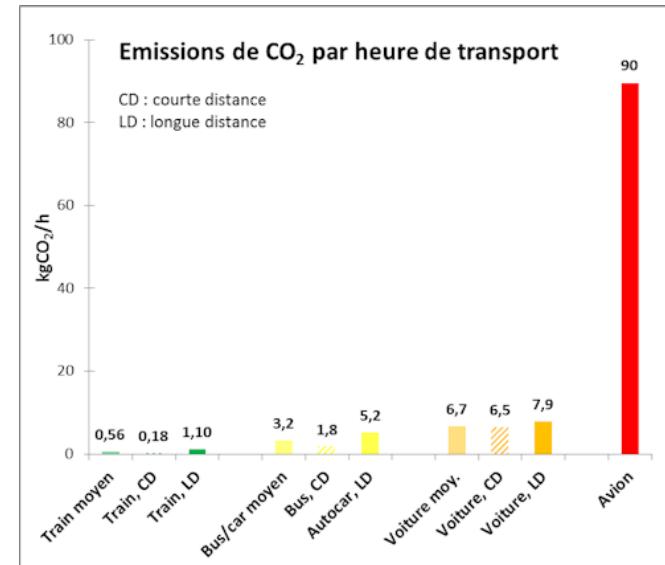
⚠️ Importance of the functional unit choice

Comparison of transportation modes [1]

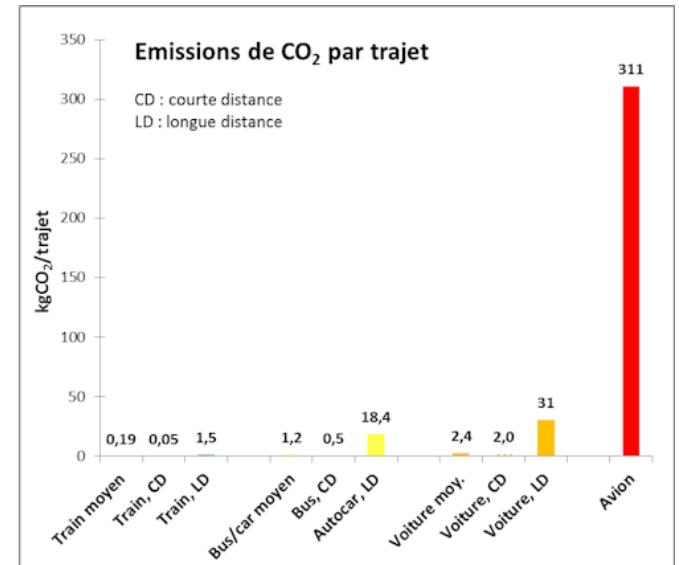
CO₂ emissions expressed per **pax.km**



per **pax.hour**



per **average trip**



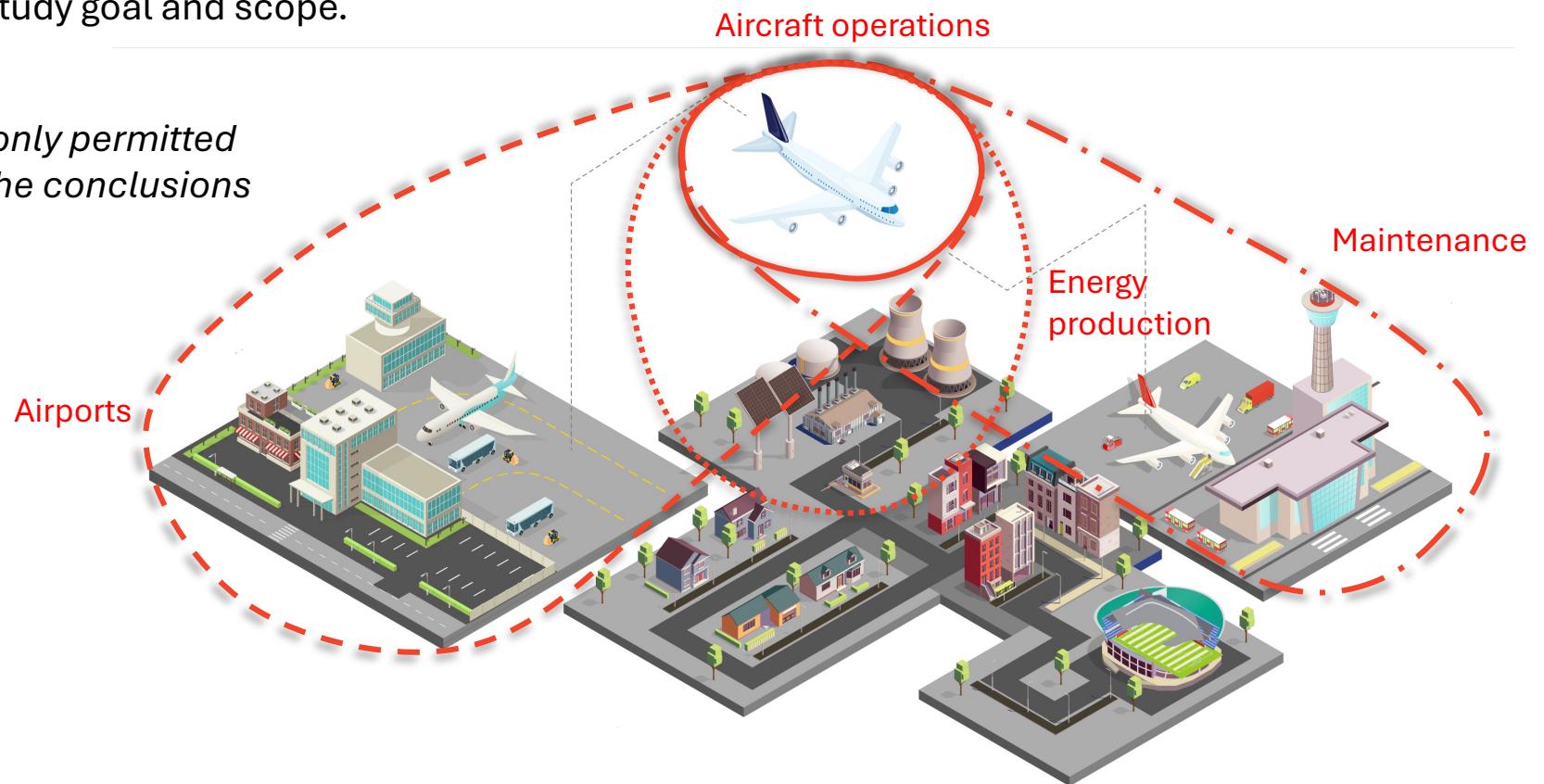
[1] Aurélien Bigo's thesis, 2020

System boundaries

What elements are to be included in the system ?
It is not pre-defined. It depends on the study goal and scope.



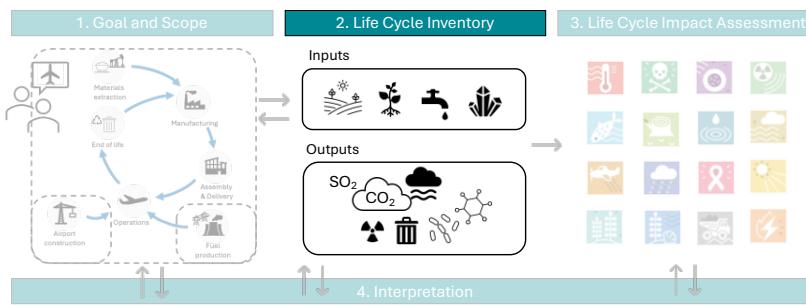
The deletion of life-cycle stages is only permitted if it does not significantly change the conclusions of the study.



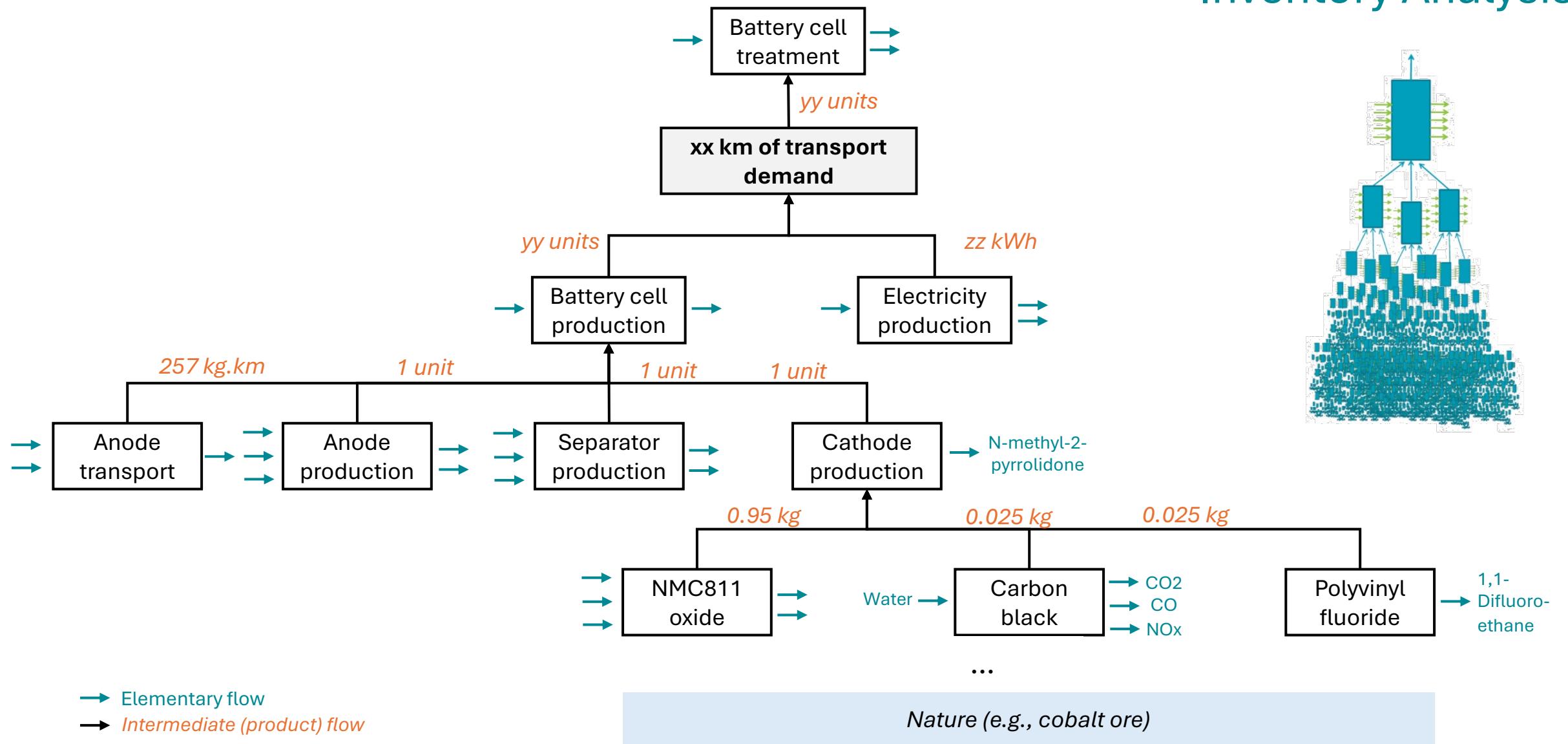
Inventory Analysis

The **inventory analysis** involves the **collection of data** and calculations to quantify the inputs and outputs of the product or system across its life cycle.

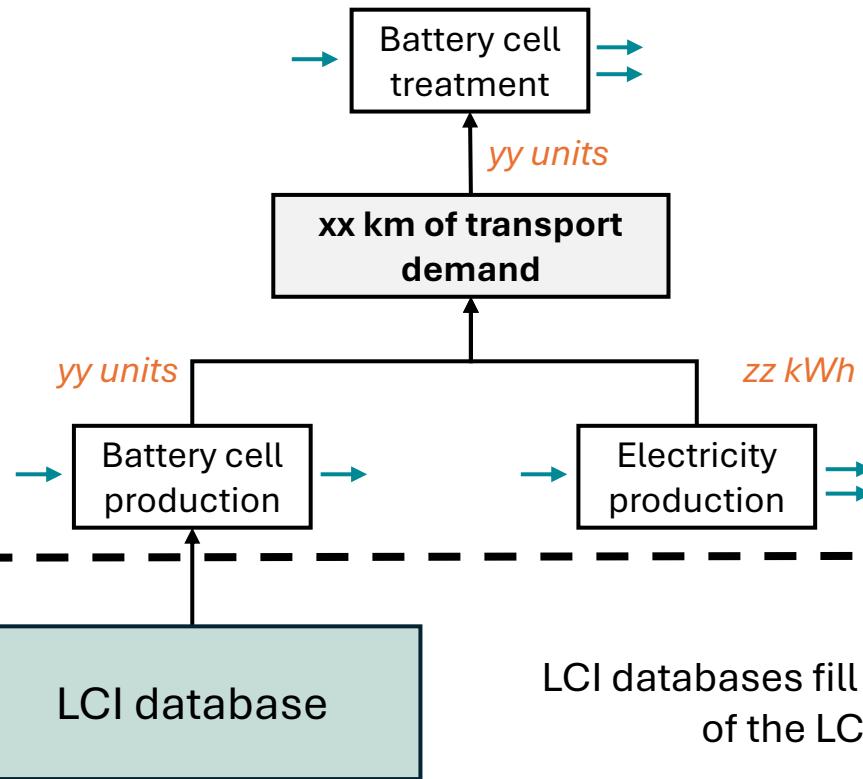
- The data can be **primary** (directly measured) or **secondary** (scientific literature, reports, databases)
- The resulting **Life Cycle Inventory (LCI)** is a collection of physical flows



Inventory Analysis



Inventory Analysis



LCI databases fill the gaps in the inventory
of the LCA practitioners.

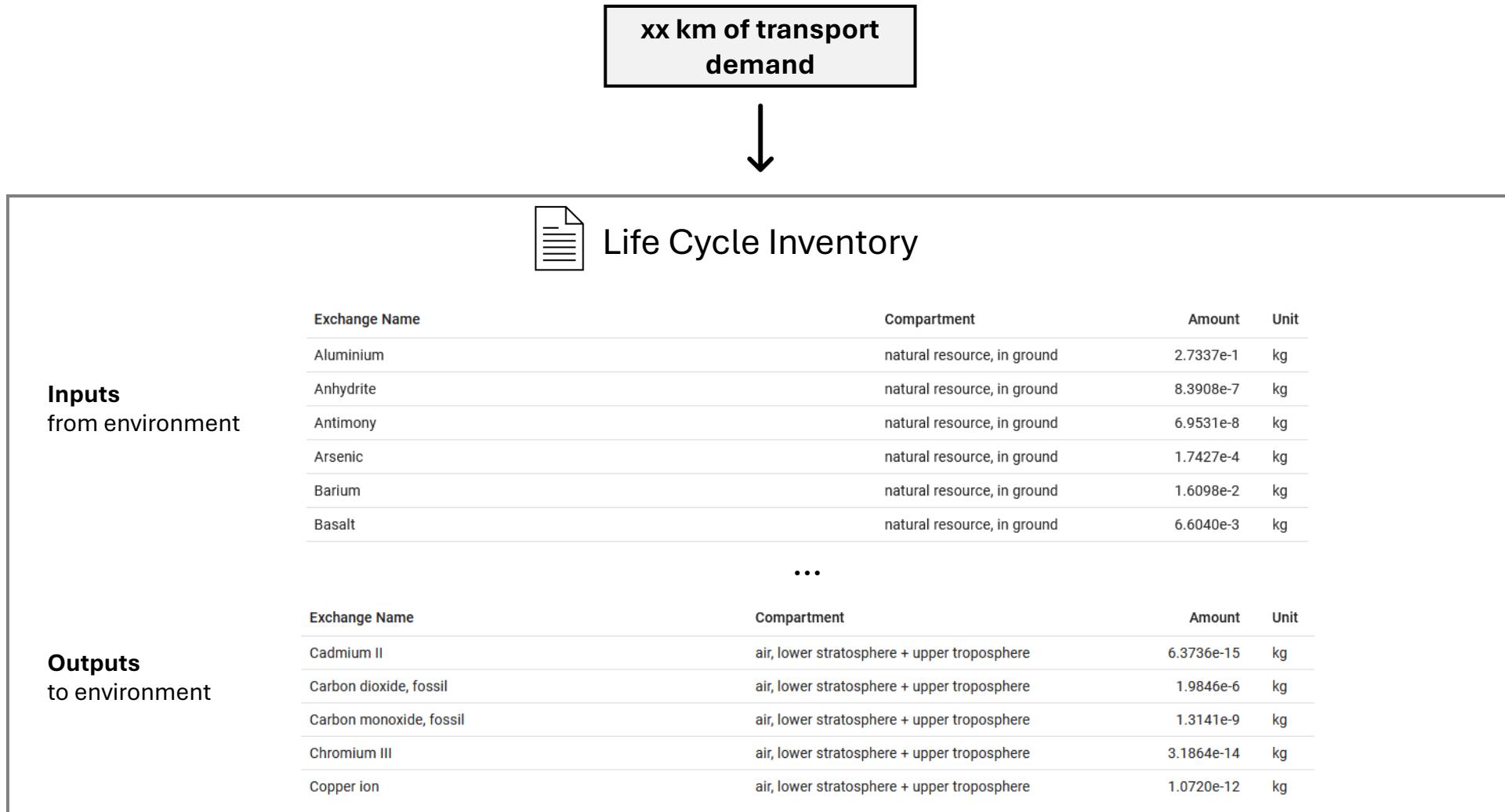
ecoinvent

thinkstep
GaBi

BASE
Empreinte®

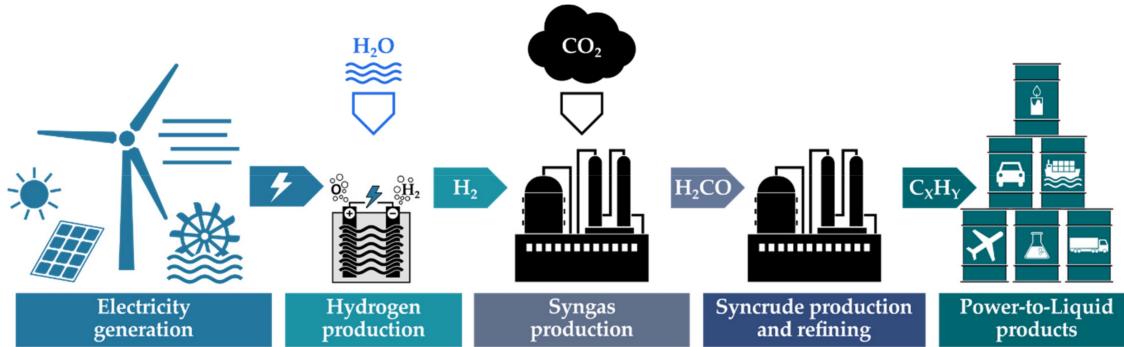
cm
carbonminds

Inventory Analysis



Inventory Analysis

An example of methodological issue: multi-functional products



The electricity generation, water consumption, and facilities are known without distinction for the entire process.

How to distribute the amounts between the co-products (kerosene, diesel, naphtha, lubricating oil) ?

	Energy allocation	Economic allocation
Naphtha	24%	7%
Kerosene	18%	6%
Diesel	37%	16%
Lubricating oil	21%	71%

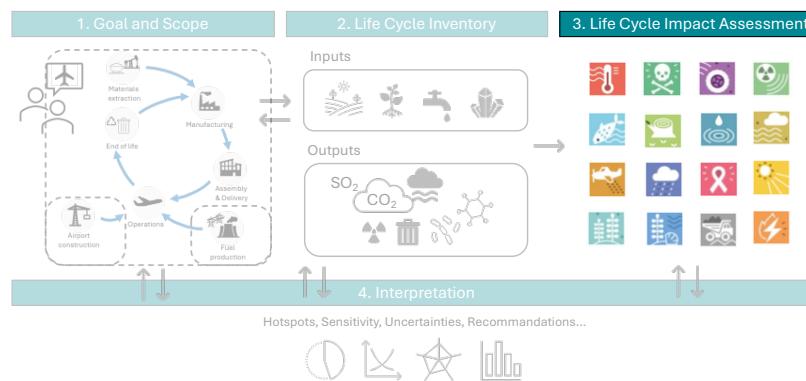
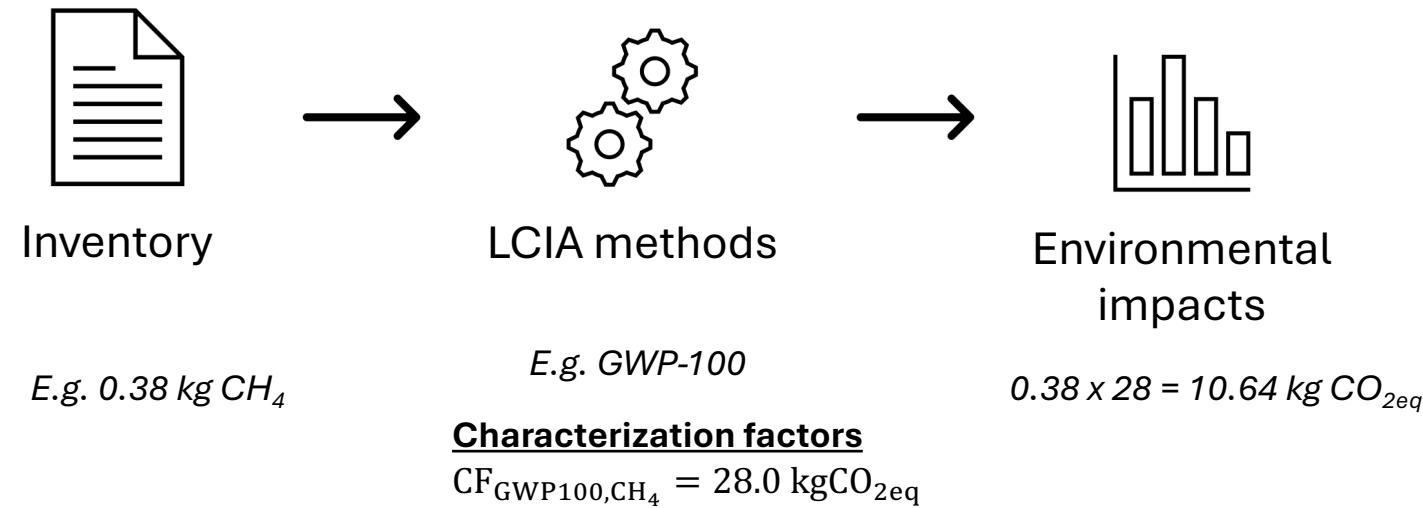
[1] R. Sacchi et al., *How to make climate-neutral aviation fly*, Nature Communications, 2023

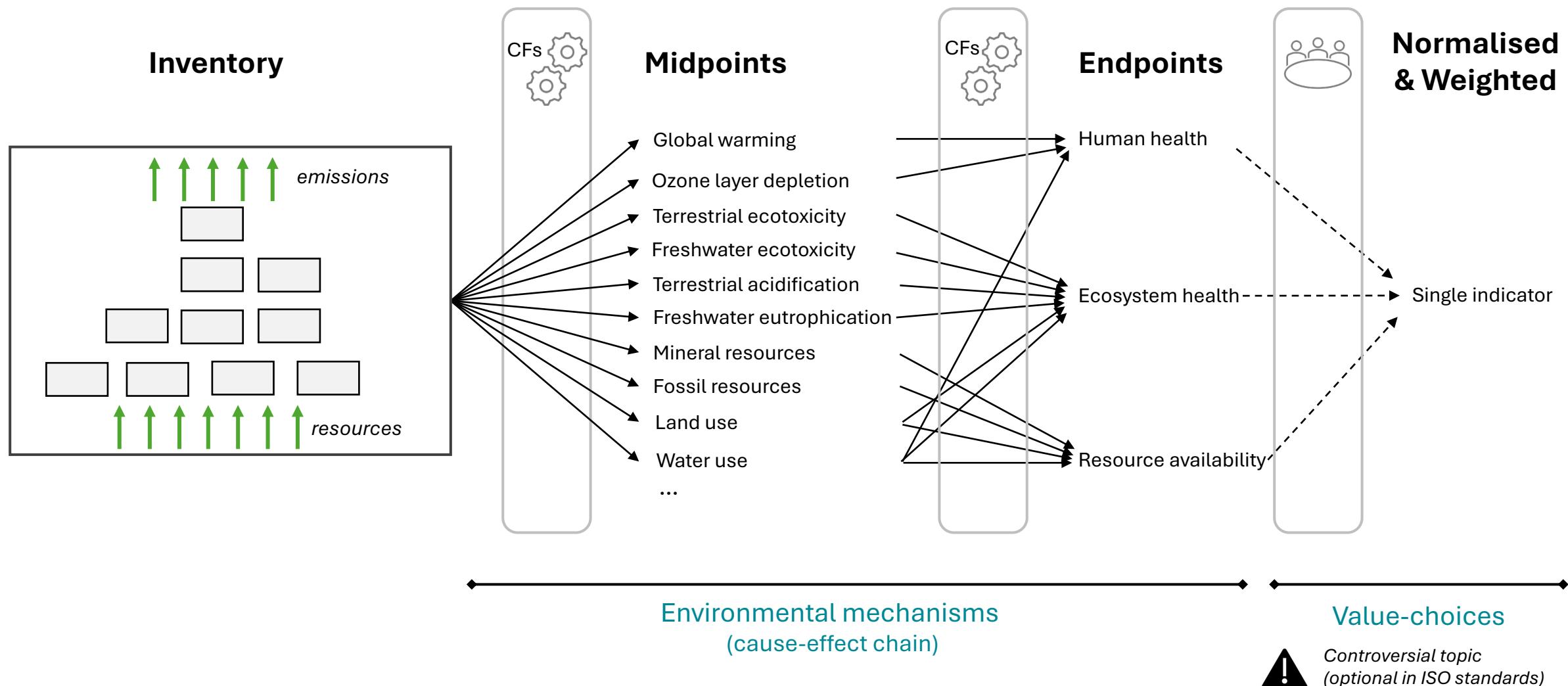
[2] C. Giesen et al., *Energy and climate impacts of producing synthetic hydrocarbon fuels from CO_2* , Environmental Science & Technology, 2014

Impact assessment

The **impact assessment** translates the inventory into environmental impacts.

⚠ *The physical flows collected in the inventory do no represent impacts in themselves.*





Examples of impacts?

Quizz!

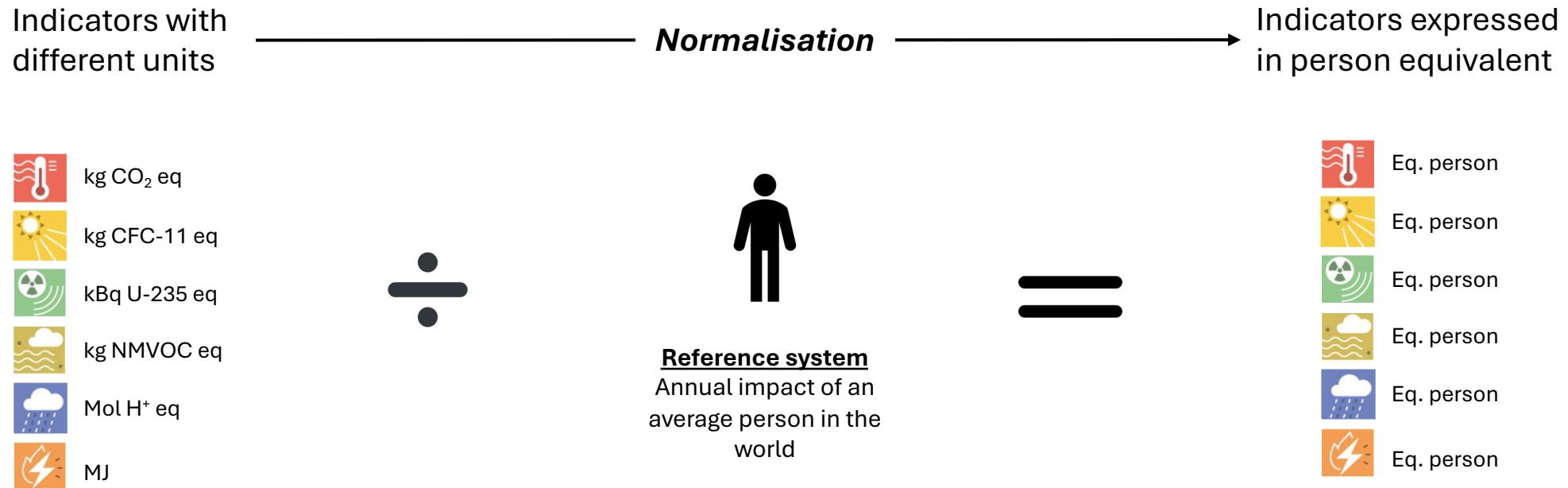
Impact assessment

Environmental Footprint methods (midpoint) – European Commission

Impact category		Impact category Indicator (unit of measure)	Description
	Climate change, total	Radiative forcing as global warming potential – GWP100 (kg CO ₂ eq)	Increase in the average global temperature resulting from greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)
	Ozone depletion	Ozone Depletion Potential – ODP (kg CFC-11 eq)	Depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer protecting from hazardous ultraviolet radiation
	Human toxicity, cancer	Comparative Toxic Unit for humans (CTUh)	Impact on human health caused by absorbing substances through the air, water, and soil. Direct effects of products on humans are not measured
	Human toxicity, non-cancer	Comparative Toxic Unit for humans (CTUh)	
	Particulate matter	Impact on human health (disease incidence)	Impact on human health caused by particulate matter emissions and its precursors (e.g. sulfur and nitrogen oxides)
	Ionising radiation, human health	Human exposure efficiency relative to U-235 (kBq U-235 eq)	Impact of exposure to ionising radiations on human health
	Photochemical ozone formation, human health	Tropospheric ozone concentration increase (kg NMVOC eq)	Potential of harmful tropospheric ozone formation ("summer smog") from air emissions
	Acidification	Accumulated Exceedance – AE (mol H ⁺ eq)	Acidification from air, water, and soil emissions (primarily sulfur compounds) mainly due to combustion processes in electricity generation, heating, and transport

	Eutrophication, terrestrial	Accumulated Exceedance – AE (mol N eq)	Eutrophication and potential impact on ecosystems caused by nitrogen and phosphorous emissions mainly due to fertilizers, combustion, sewage systems
	Eutrophication, freshwater	Fraction of nutrients reaching freshwater end compartment (kg P eq)	
	Eutrophication, marine	Fraction of nutrients reaching marine end compartment (kg N eq)	
	Ecotoxicity, freshwater	Comparative Toxic Unit for ecosystems (CTUe)	Impact of toxic substances on freshwater ecosystems
	Land use	Soil quality index, representing the aggregated impact of land use on: Biotic production; Erosion resistance; Mechanical filtration; Groundwater replenishment (Dimensionless – pt)	Transformation and use of land for agriculture, roads, housing, mining or other purposes. The impact can include loss of species, organic matter, soil, filtration capacity, permeability
	Water use	Weighted user deprivation potential (m ³ world eq)	Depletion of available water depending on local water scarcity and water needs for human activities and ecosystem integrity
	Resource use, minerals and metals	Abiotic resource depletion – ADP ultimate reserves (kg Sb eq)	Depletion of non-renewable resources and deprivation for future generations
	Resource use, fossils	Abiotic resource depletion, fossil fuels – ADP-fossil (MJ)	

The normalisation step (optional)



The normalisation step enables to better understand the relative magnitude of each impact.

The weighting step (optional)



The weighting step converts the normalised results based on the relative importance of the impact categories. It involves the use of **value choices** (e.g., monetary valuation, experts and citizen panels) and cannot be based on natural science alone.

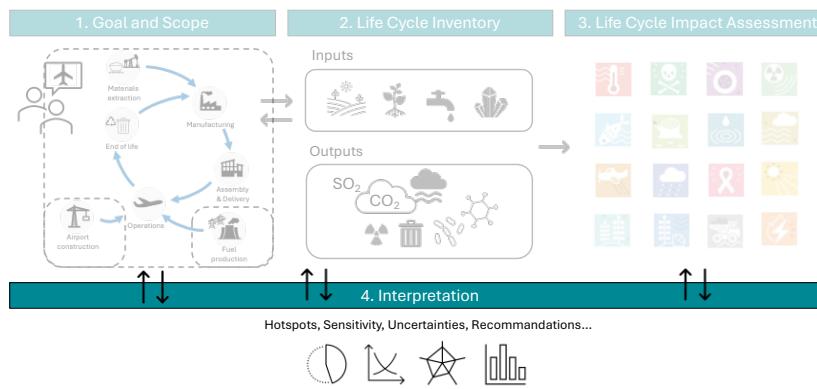
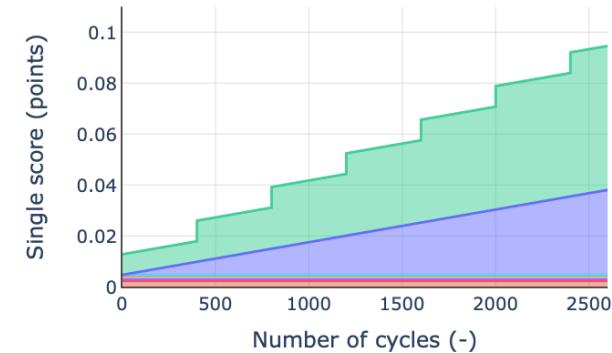
It may also include an aggregation into a single score.

Interpretation

The **interpretation** phase follows the impact assessment to provide a complete and consistent presentation of the results. Interpretation steps include:

- **Completeness check** to ensure that all gathered information and data are sufficient for reaching conclusions
- **Sensitivity analysis** to determine the influence of variations in assumptions, modeling choices and methods
Examples: What if we use a local supplier? What if we change the electricity mix? If we change the system lifetime?

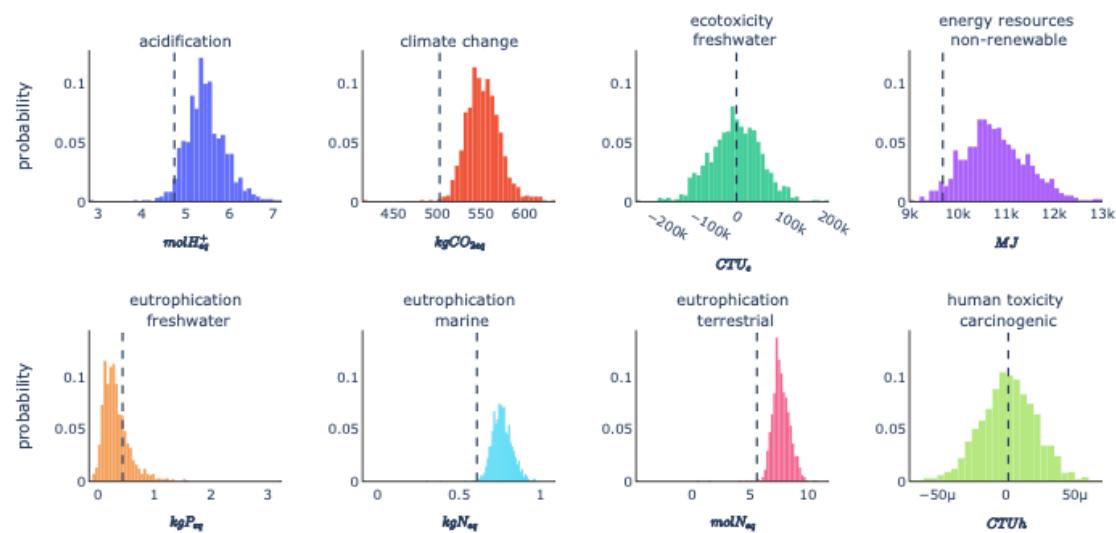
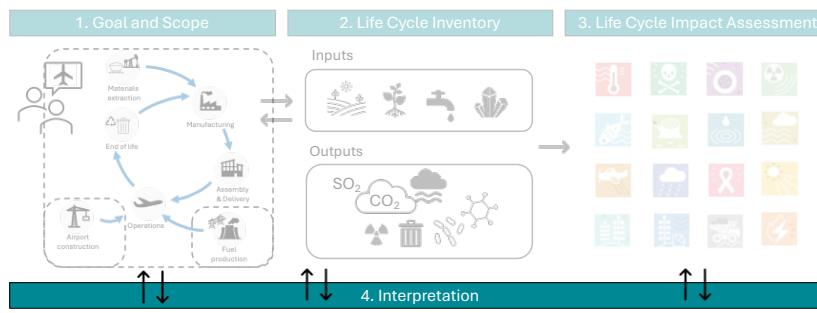
	Climate	Land use	Water use	...
p_1	Red	Light Red	Light Red	
p_2	Light Red	Red		
p_n	Red	Light Red	Red	



Interpretation

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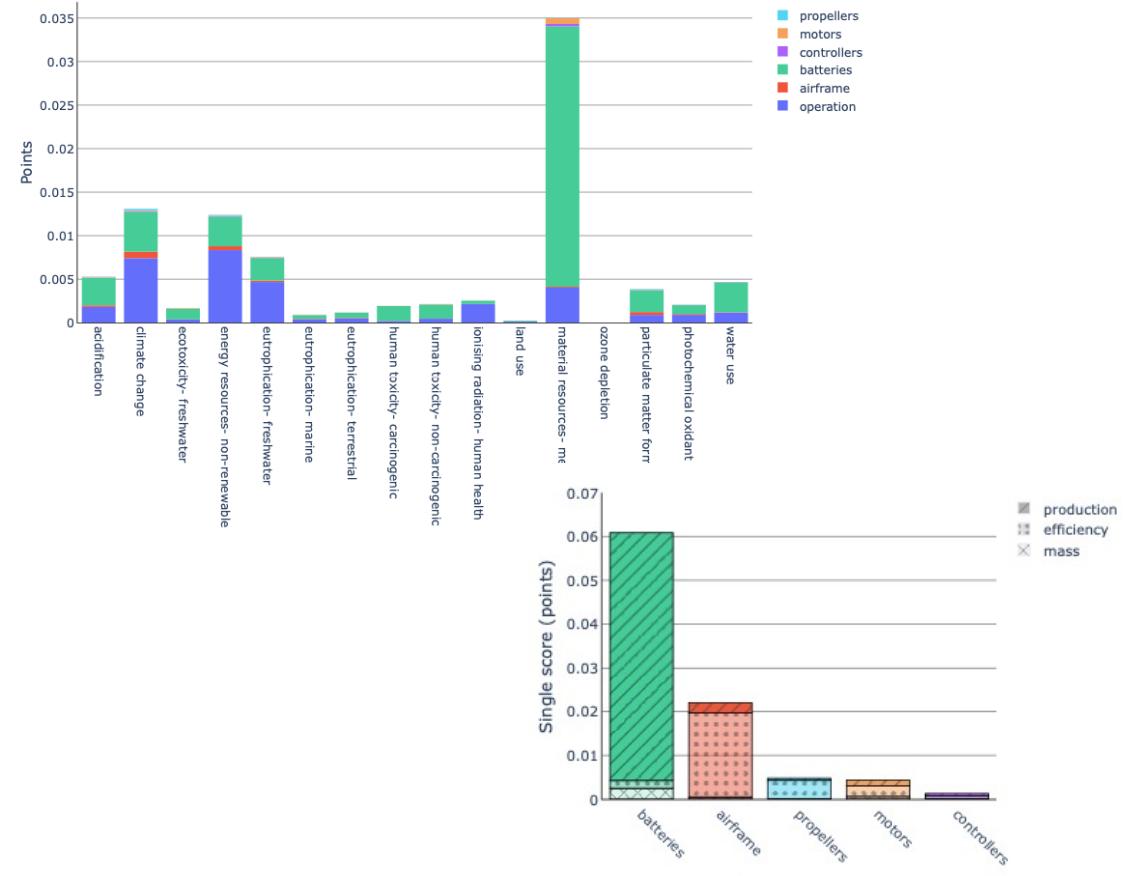
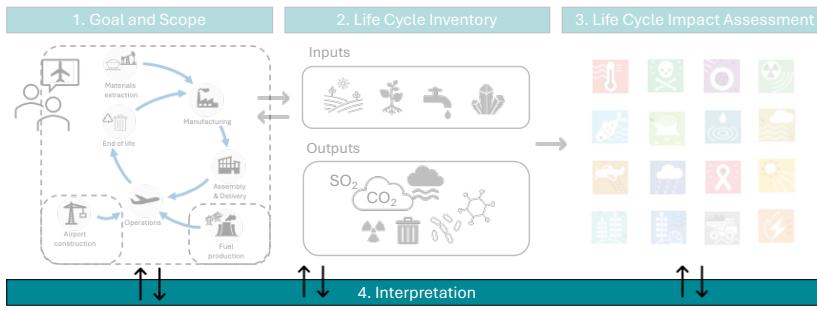
- **Uncertainty analysis** to study the influence of discrepancies between the measured/calculated data and their true values.
Examples:
 - LCI data : Kerosene consumption = $40.1 \pm 3.8 \text{ kg CO}_2 / \text{pax.km}$
 - LCIA method : 1 kg CH₄ = 25-30 kg CO₂ eq



Interpretation

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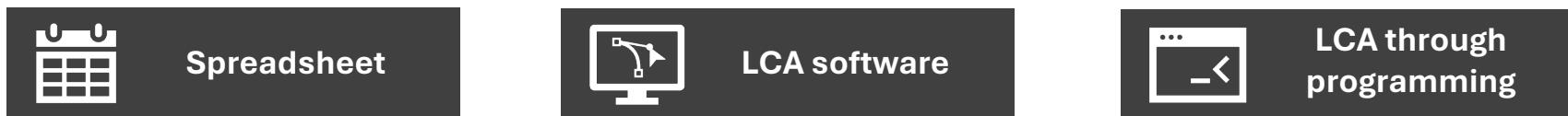
- **Hotspot** (or contribution) analysis to identify:
 - The most relevant impact categories,
 - Life cycle stages (e.g. extraction, use),
 - And elementary flow (e.g. CO₂)



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A range of tools... for various publics



Ease-of-use	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●
Functionalities & Versatility	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●
Possibility of doing a full LCA	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●
Calculation speed	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●



Brightway
Open-source software package
written in Python

Generic databases

Professional databases

Expensive but exhaustive and regularly updated



thinkstep
GaBi

Free databases



Official French database



Product
Environmental
Footprint



European Commission initiative

Sector-specific databases



& many more...

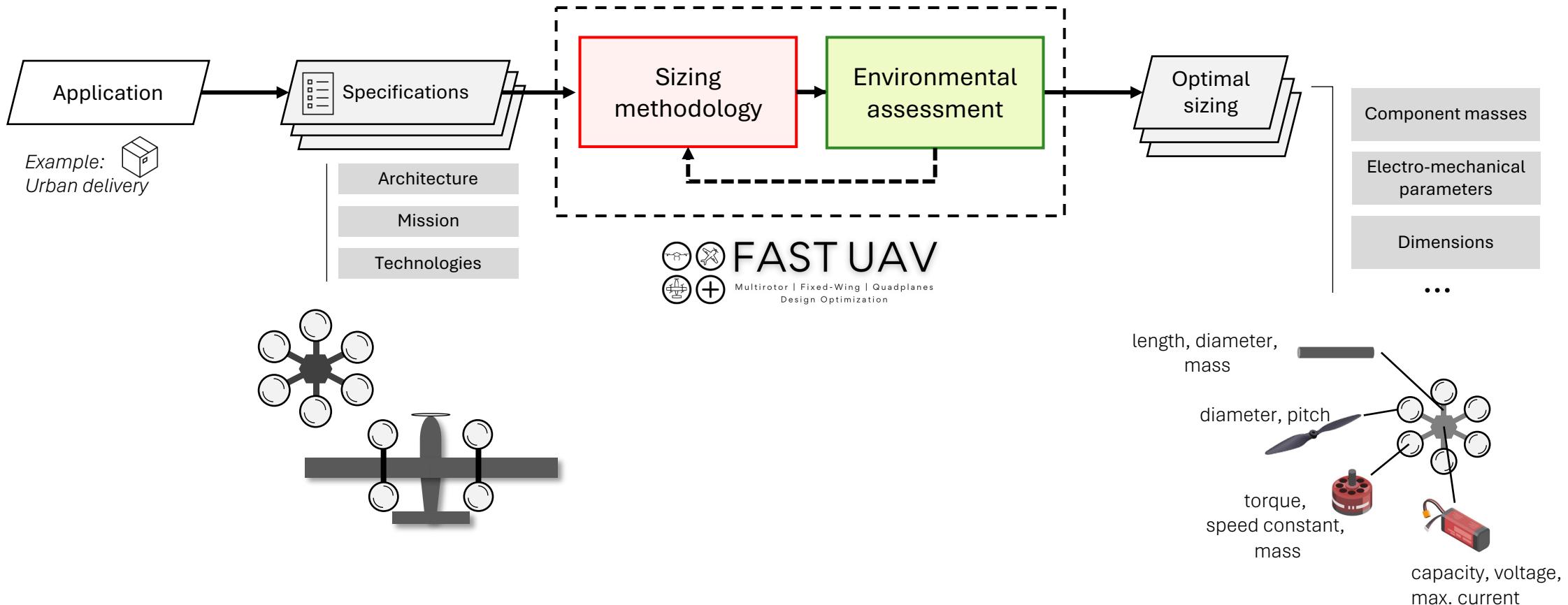
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Case study

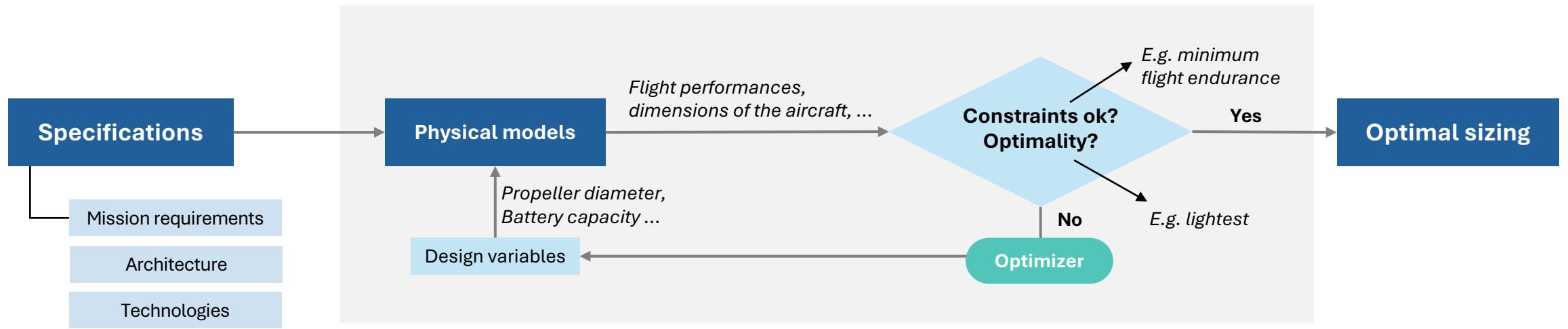
Eco-design of a drone

Case study – Eco-design of a drone



Case study – Eco-design of a drone

Sizing
methodology



Case study – Eco-design of a drone

Environmental assessment

LCA of background

Propeller [1 kg]	83.2 kg CO ₂ -eq 2.5×10^{-4} kg Sb-eq ...
Battery [1 kg]	14.8 kg CO ₂ -eq 2.1×10^{-3} kg Sb-eq ...
...	
Electricity [1 kWh]	0.55 kg CO ₂ -eq ...

Parametric LCA model

$$f_{climate}(P_i) = 83.2 \times m_{propellers} + \dots + 0.55 \times E_{missions}$$

16 impact categories ^[1]

+ Partial derivatives for improved numerical resolutions

$$\frac{\partial f_{climate}}{\partial m_{propellers}}(P_i) = 83.2$$

...

$$\frac{\partial f_{climate}}{\partial E_{mission}}(P_i) = 0.55$$

Component masses,
mission energy

Sizing
methodology

$$m_{propellers} = 0.08 \text{ kg}$$
$$m_{batteries} = 1.69 \text{ kg}$$
$$\dots$$

Impacts evaluation

Optimization
objective or constraints

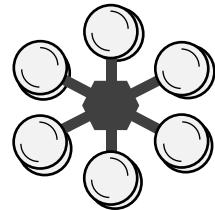
ecoinvent
LCI database
version 3.9.0

  LCA Algebraic

Open-source software tools
for LCA calculation

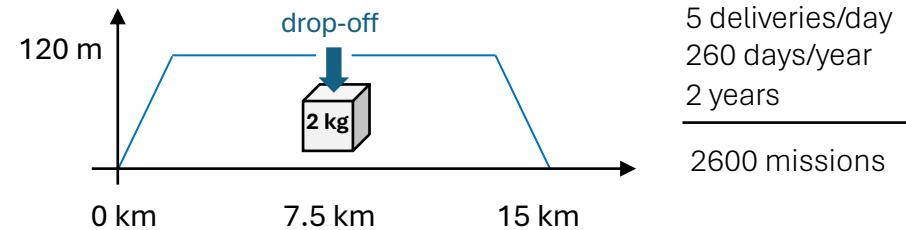
Case study – Eco-design of a drone

Architecture

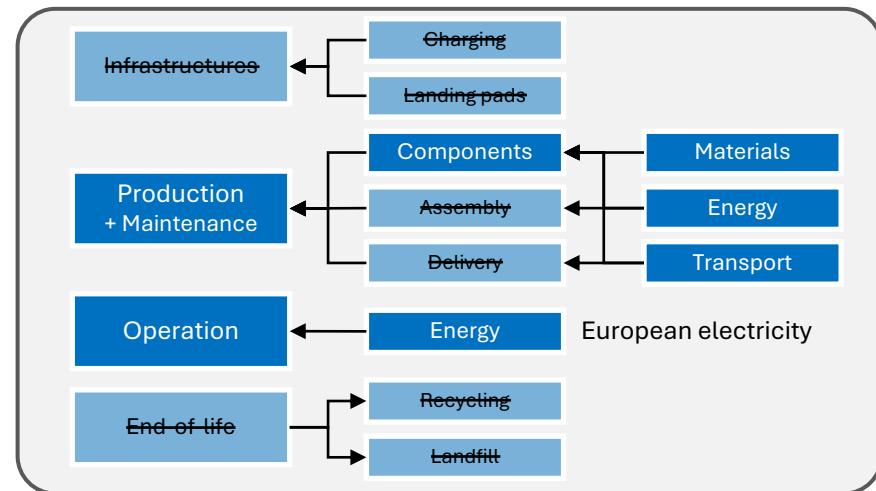


Hexacopter with coaxial rotors

Mission & usage



Boundaries of LCA study

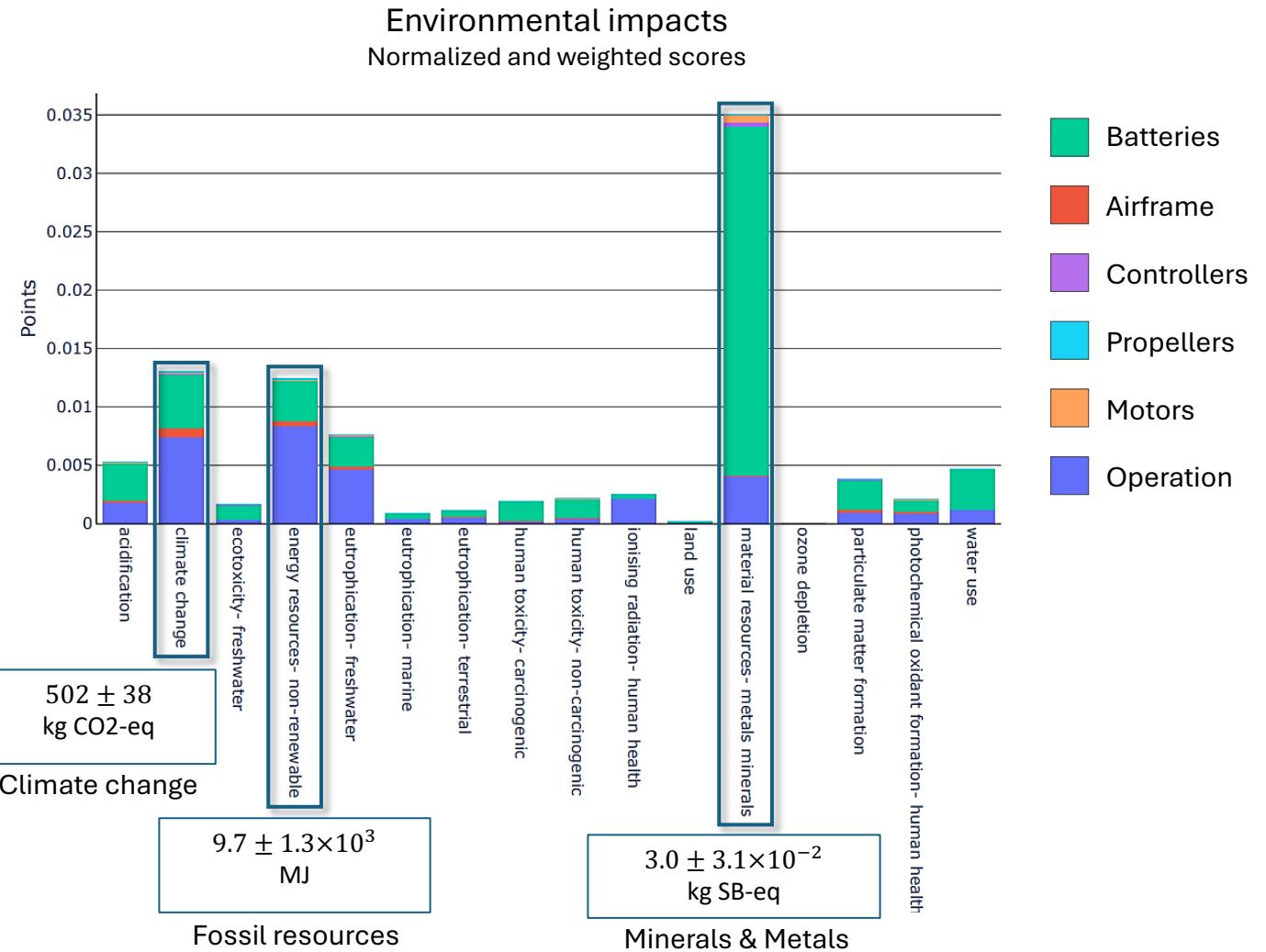
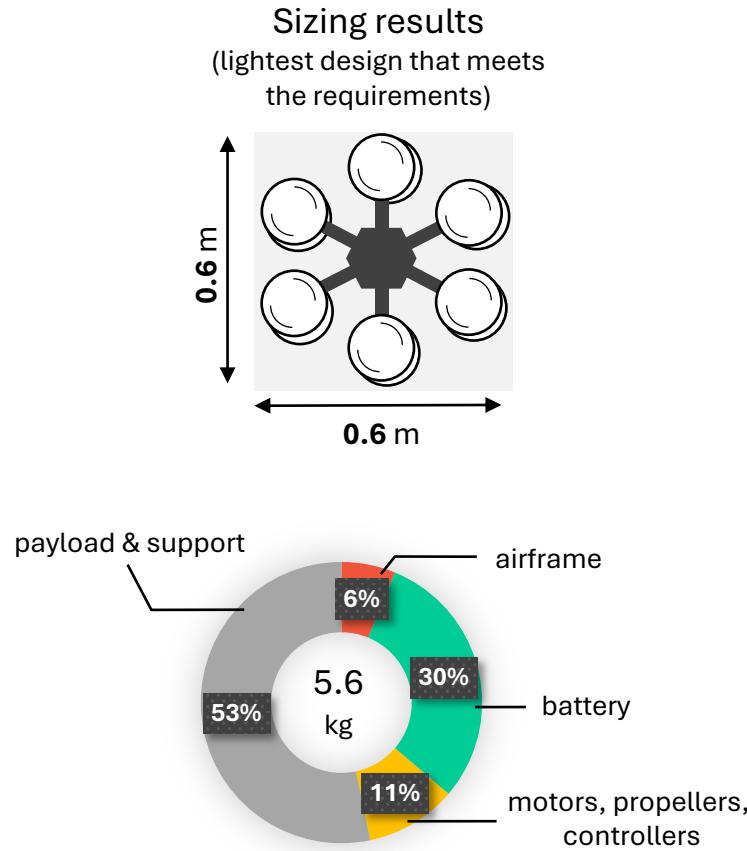


Research questions

1. Critical environmental impacts and main contributors?
2. Design implications of mitigating these environmental impacts?

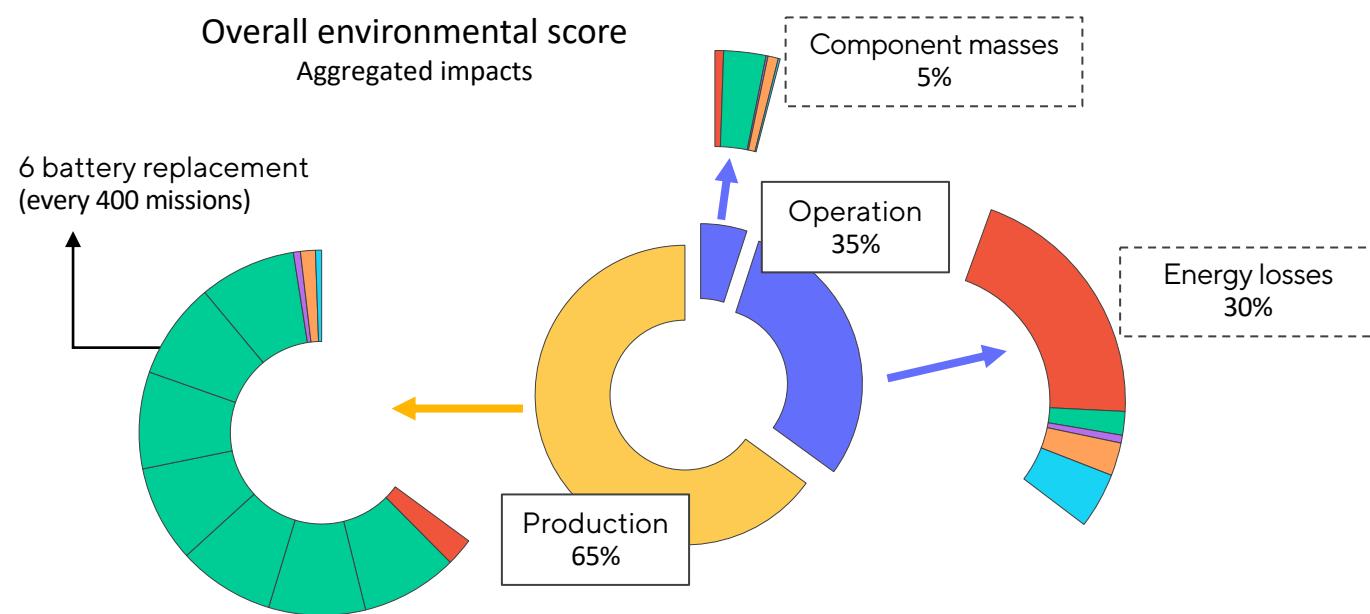
Case study – Eco-design of a drone

LCA results for the reference drone



Case study – Eco-design of a drone

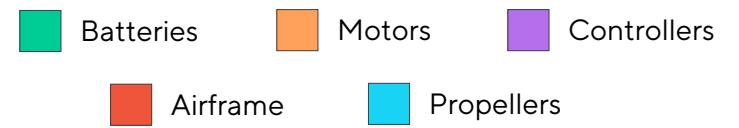
Hotspot analysis



Taylor expansion

$$S_{operation} = S_0 + \sum_i \left. \frac{\partial S}{\partial m_i} \right|_0 \Delta m_i + \sum_i \left. \frac{\partial S}{\partial \eta_i} \right|_0 \Delta \eta_i + \frac{1}{2} \sum_i \left. \frac{\partial^2 S}{\partial m_i^2} \right|_0 \Delta m_i^2 + \frac{1}{2} \sum_i \left. \frac{\partial^2 S}{\partial \eta_i^2} \right|_0 \Delta \eta_i^2 + \dots$$

Components "imperfections":
Mass $m_i \neq 0$, Efficiency $\eta_i \neq 1$



Production Energy loss Mass

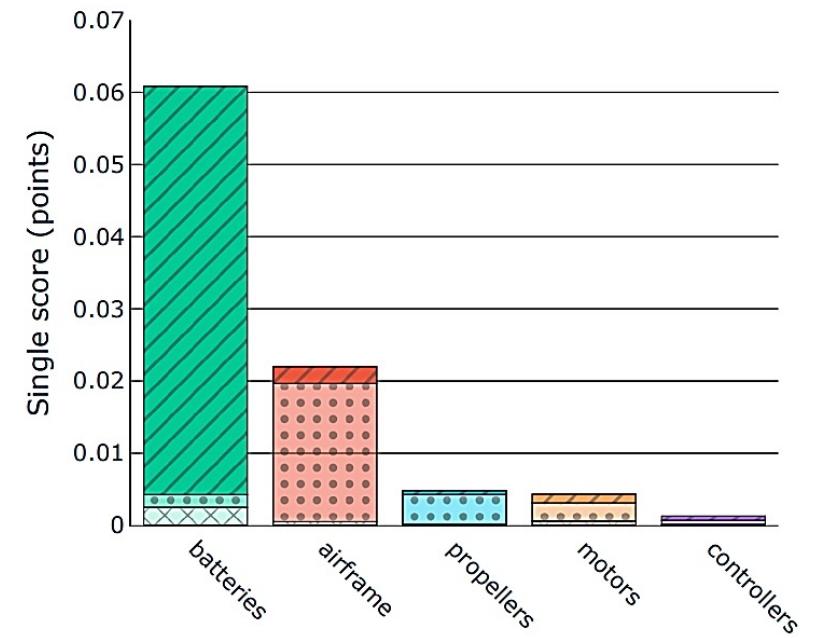
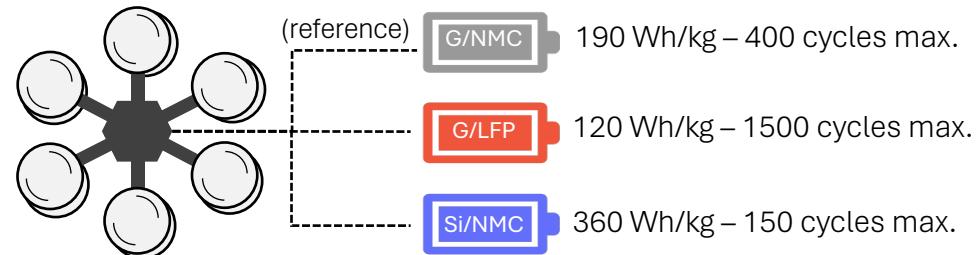


Fig.: Component contributions to the environmental score

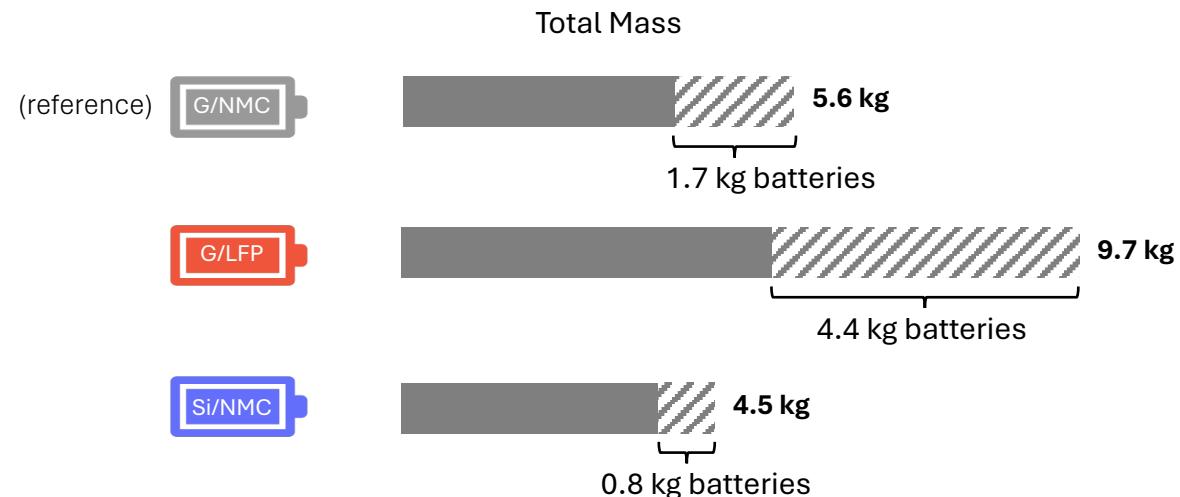
Case study – Eco-design of a drone

Sensitivity to the battery technology

Technology assumptions



Sizing results



LCA results (“single” score)

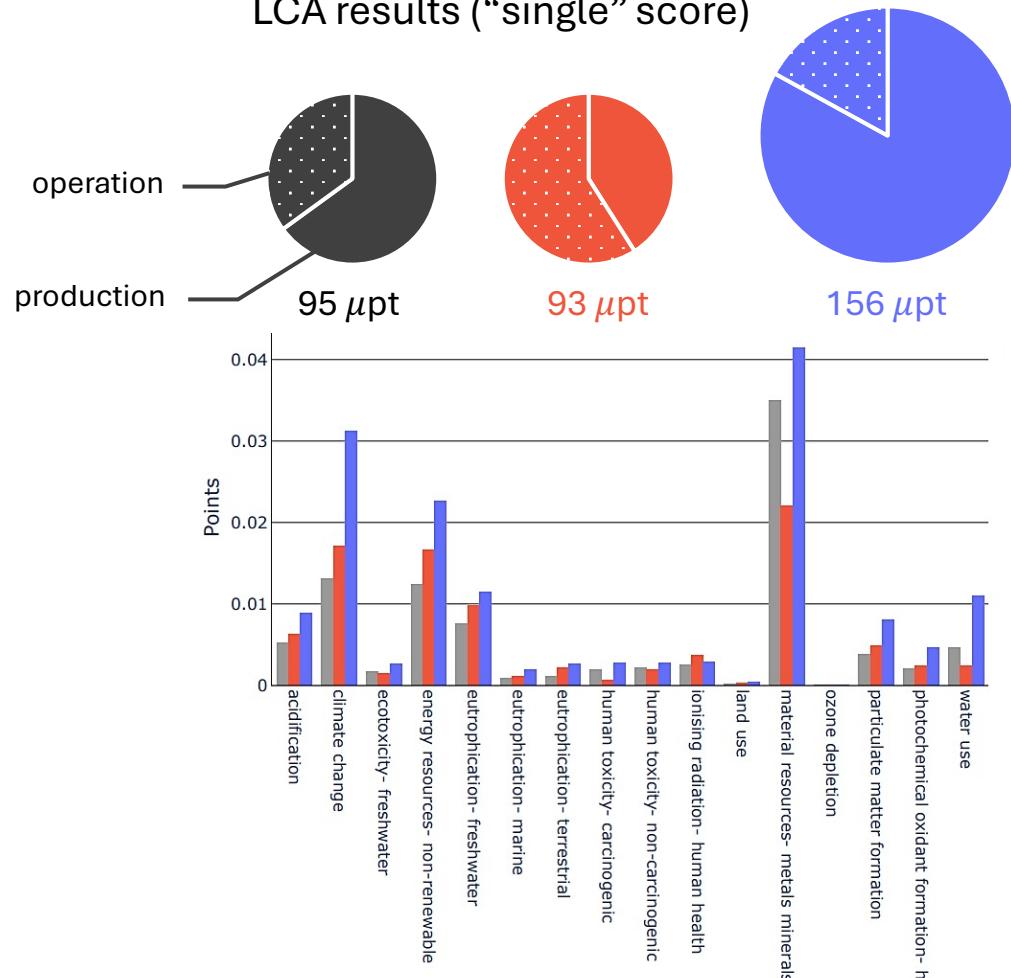


Fig.: Comparison of the environmental impacts for the three UAV designs

Case study – Eco-design of a drone

Sensitivity to the optimality criterion

Sizing results

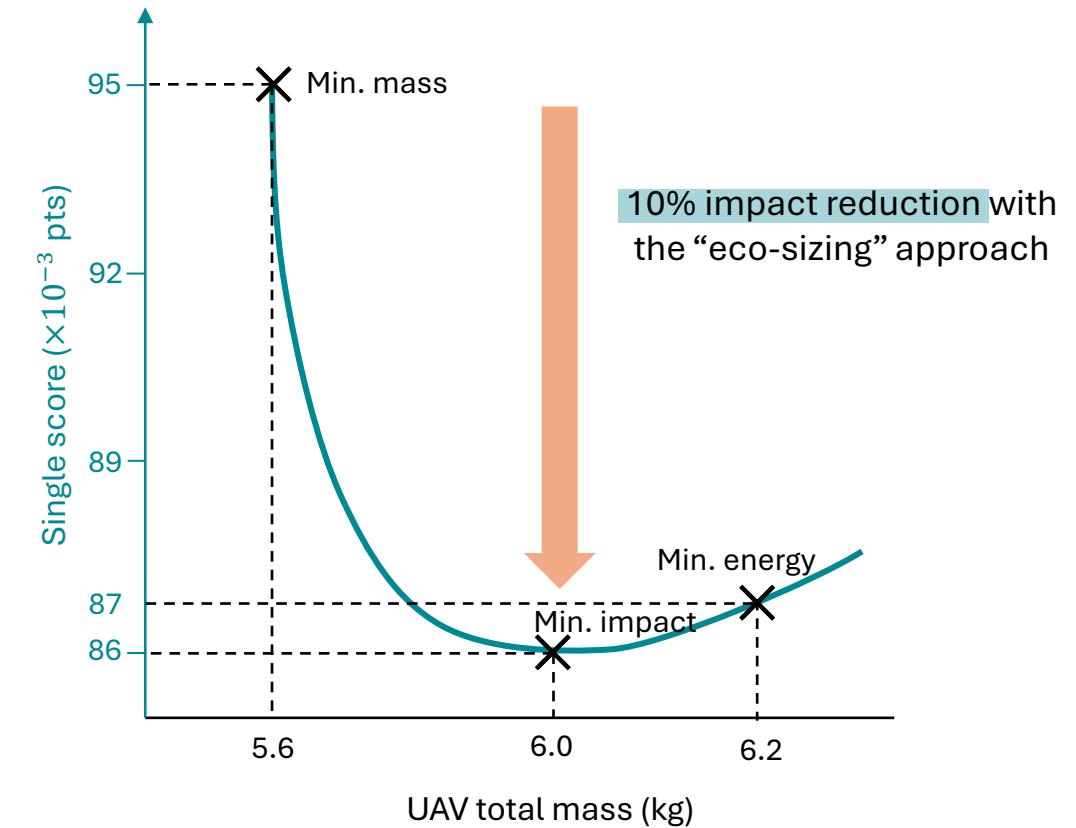
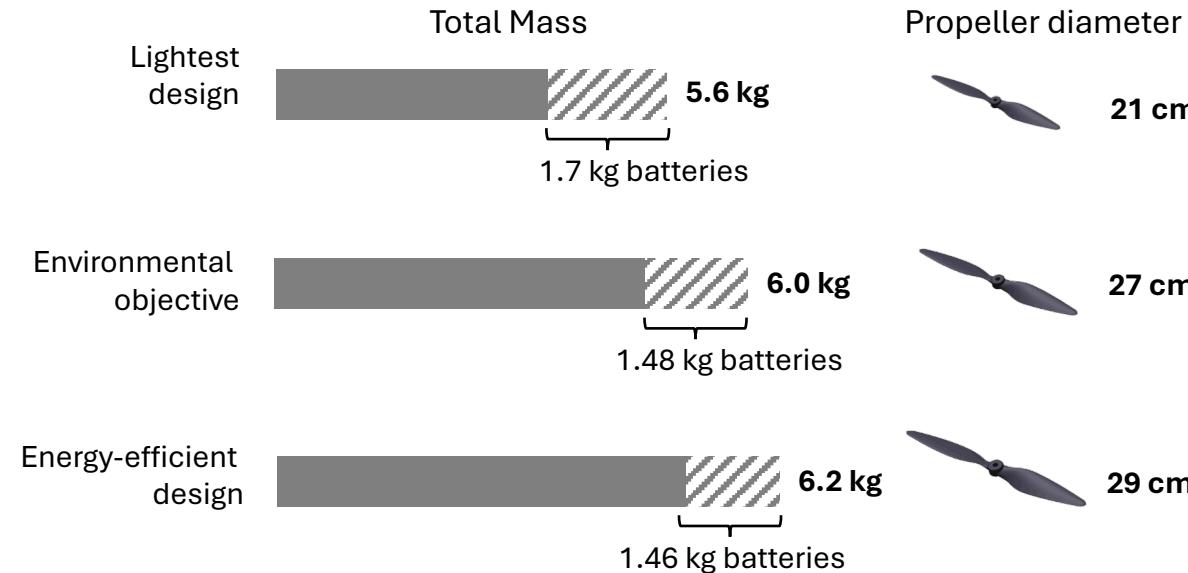
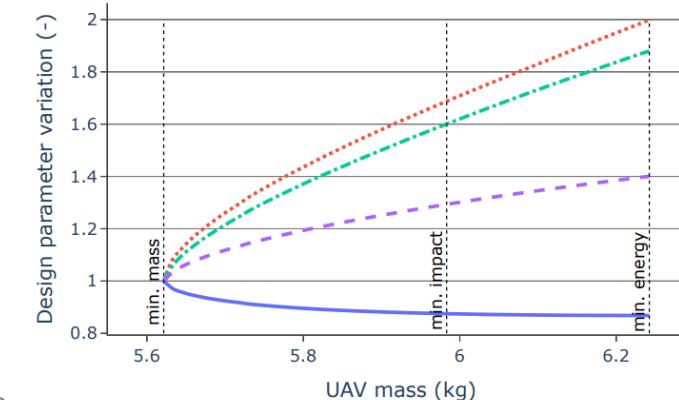
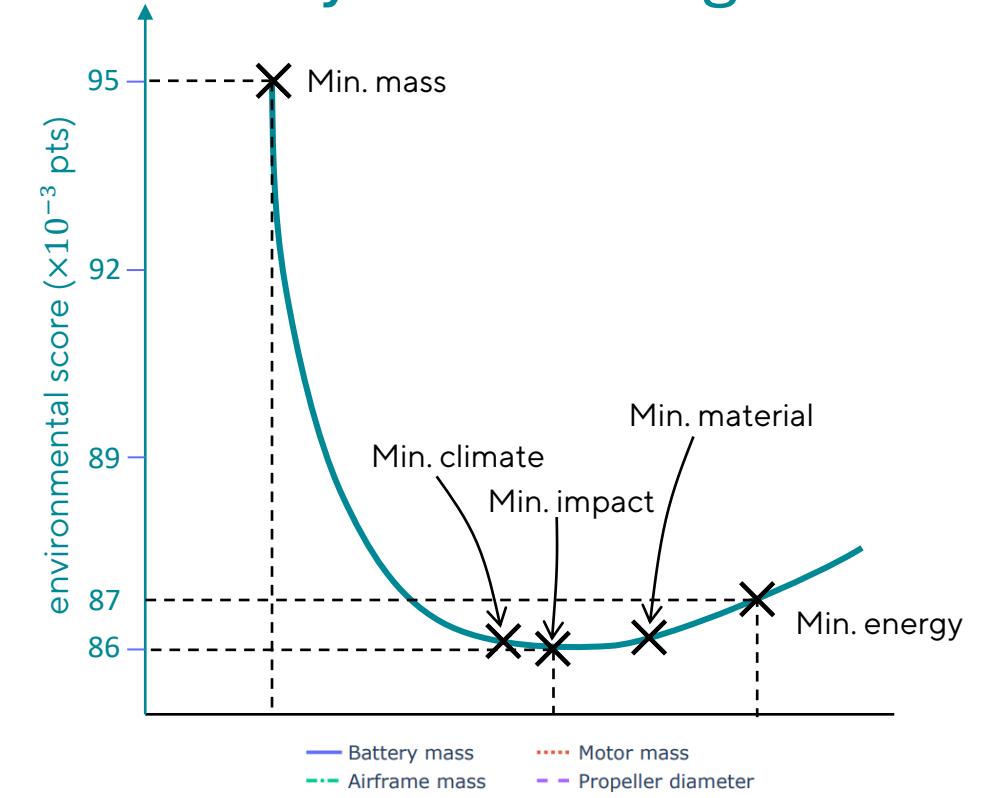
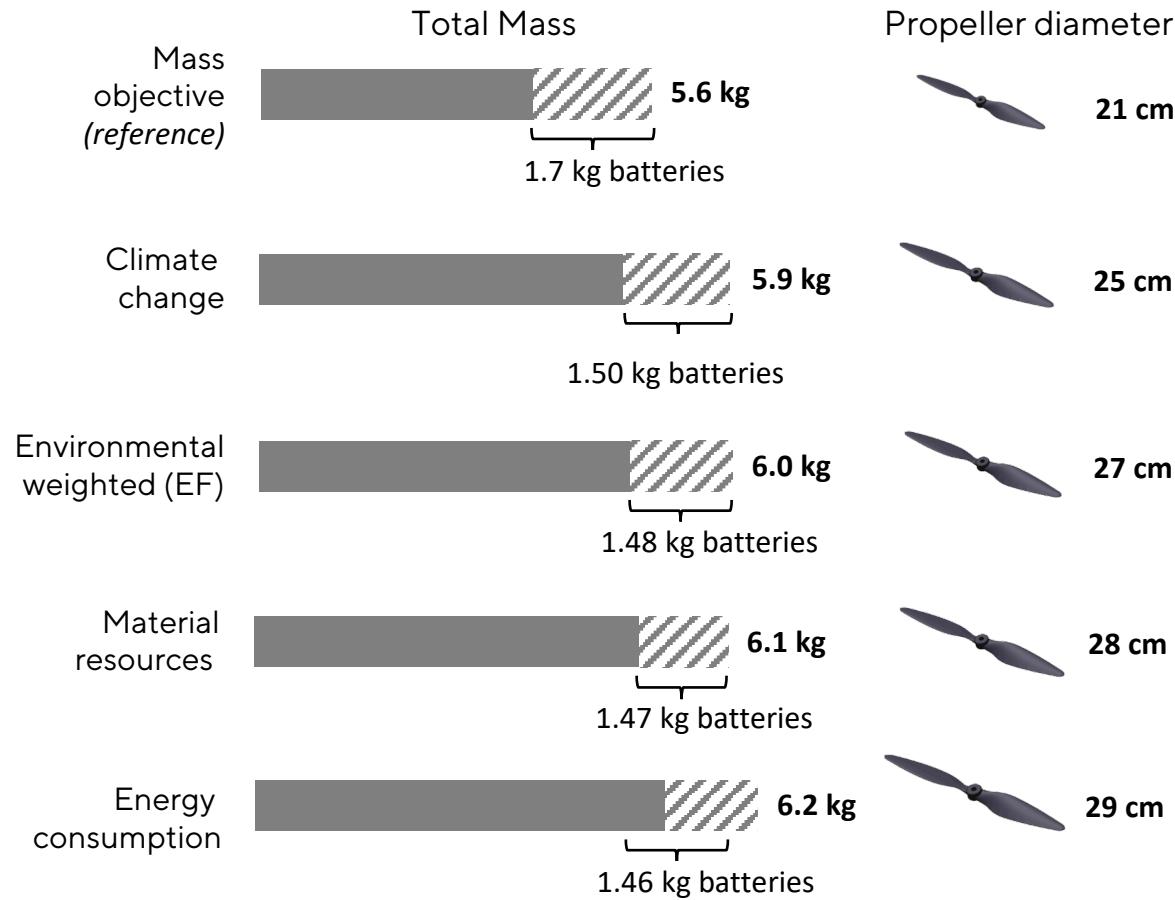


Fig.: Environmental score for different sizing objectives as a function of UAV mass

Case study – Eco-design of a drone

Sensitivity to the optimality criterion

Sizing results

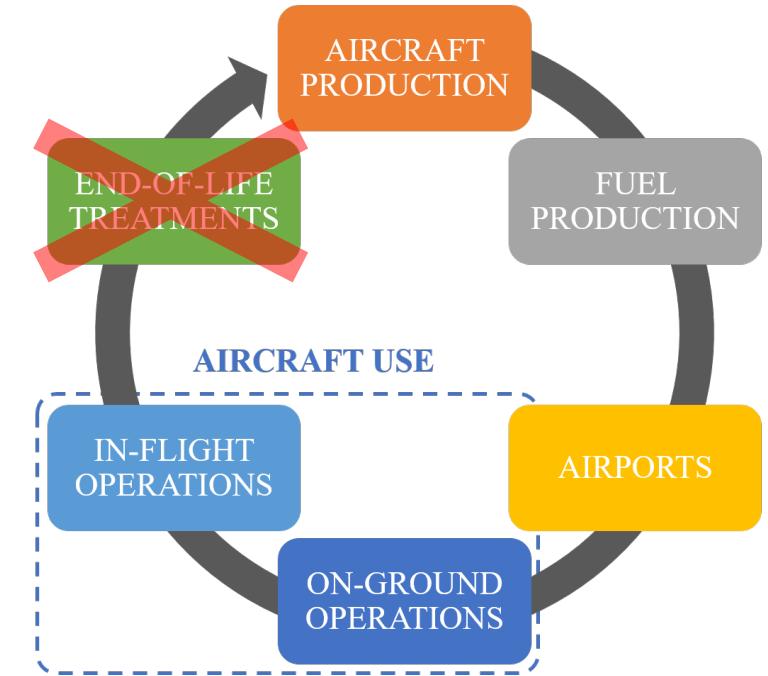


Case study

LCA of passenger aircraft

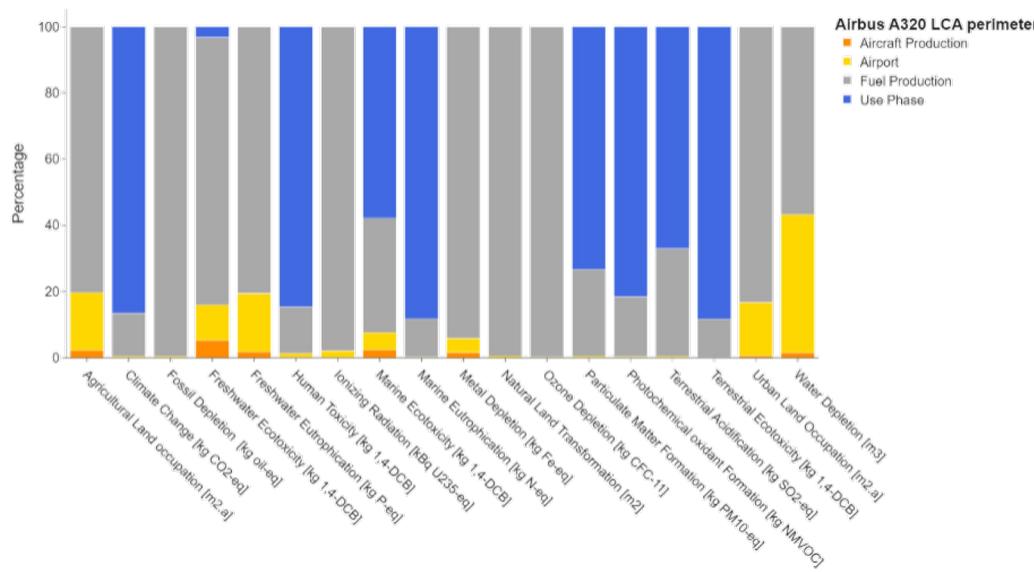
Case study – LCA of passenger aircraft

Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Identify the key contributors to the environmental impacts of an aircraft life cycleExplore the potential of biofuelsExplore two different aircraft architectures
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>Functional unit:</u> « Transportation of one passenger over one kilometer » (Revenue Passenger Kilometer - RPK) Reference aircraft : A320 Additional assumptions: 25 years lifetime (32,964 flights), load factor 82.4%, average flight of 1185 km.<u>Boundaries:</u> Production of aircraft, airports & fuels. On-ground & in-flight operations. <i>No end-of-life.</i>
Data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Data from academic and industrial reportsEcoinvent database for airports and fuels production
Additional information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Software tool: OpenLCALCIA methods: ReCiPe 2016



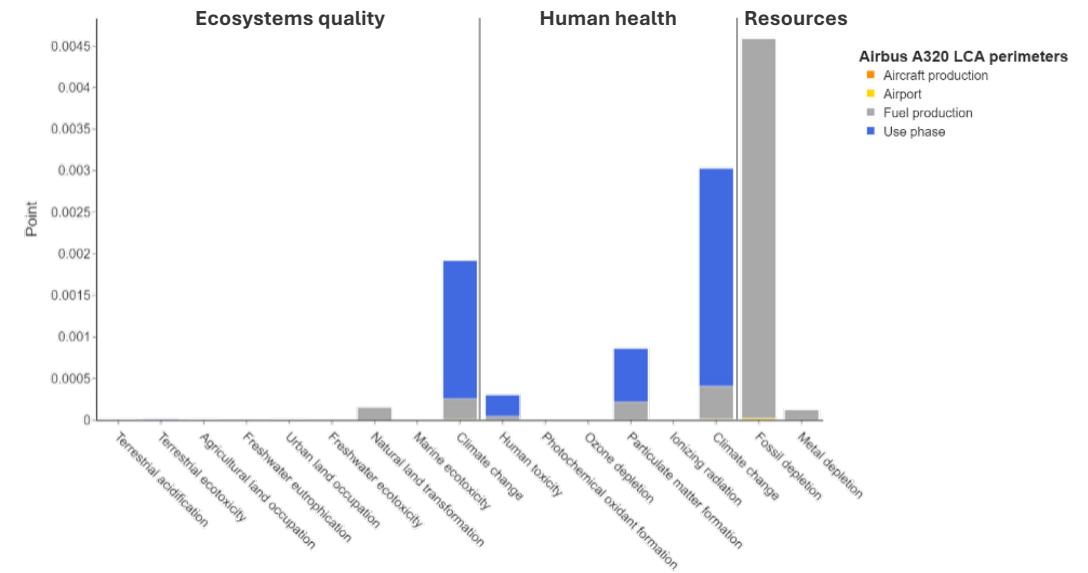
Case study – LCA of passenger aircraft

Midpoint results for an Airbus A320



- Manufacturing negligible
- Airport on water depletion
- Climate change: 109 gCO₂-eq/RPK

Endpoint results for an Airbus A320

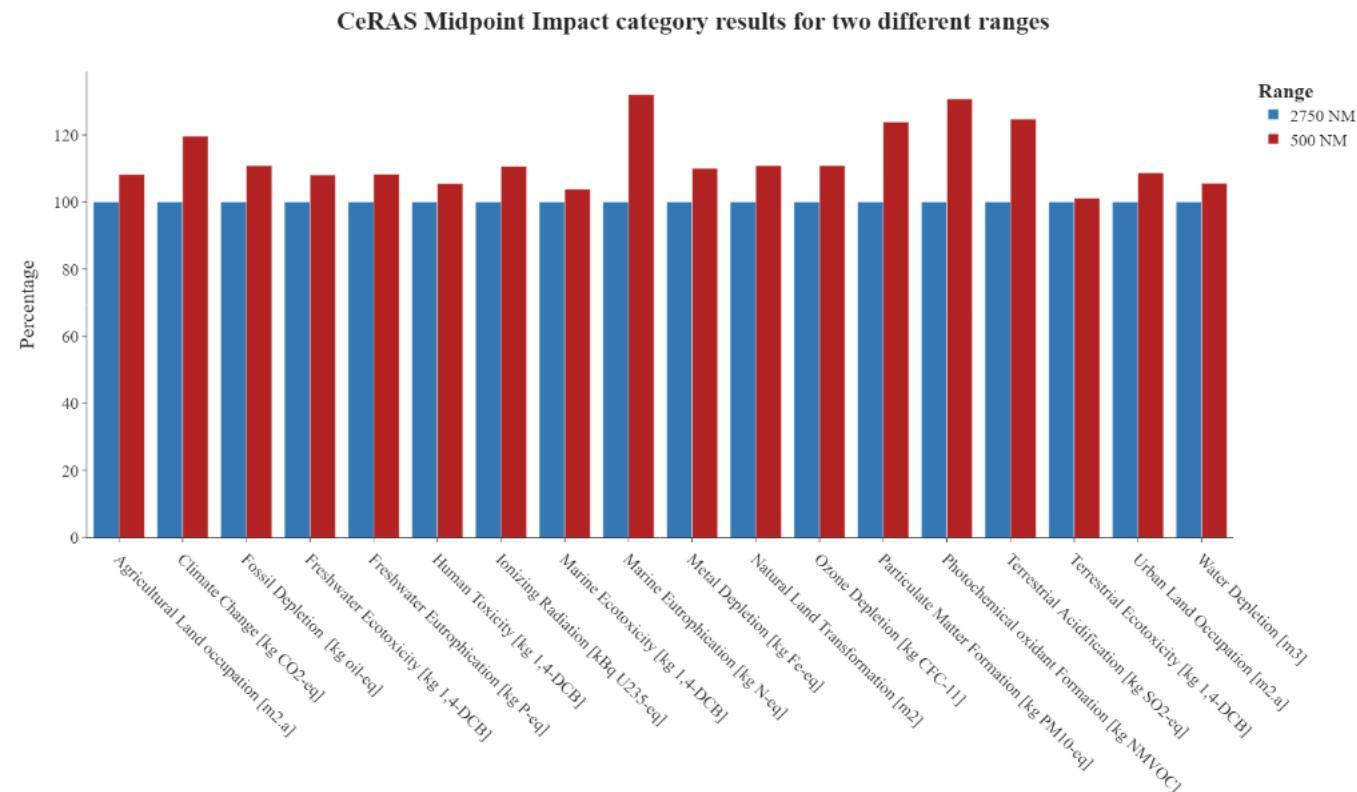


Main contributors to endpoint damages:

- Impact categories: Fossil depletion, Climate change & Particulate matter formation
- Processes: Fuel production and combustion

Case study – LCA of passenger aircraft

Midpoint results for a A320-like aircraft operating at two different ranges



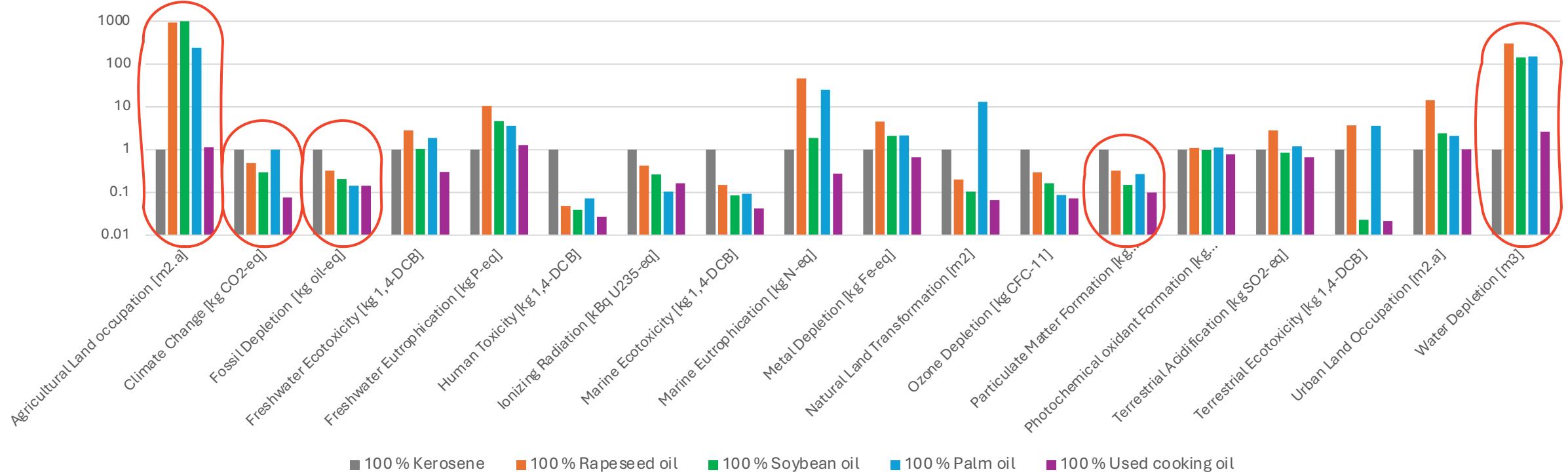
Lower range

=

more impacts per kilometer
(relative increase of take-off
phases)

Case study – LCA of passenger aircraft

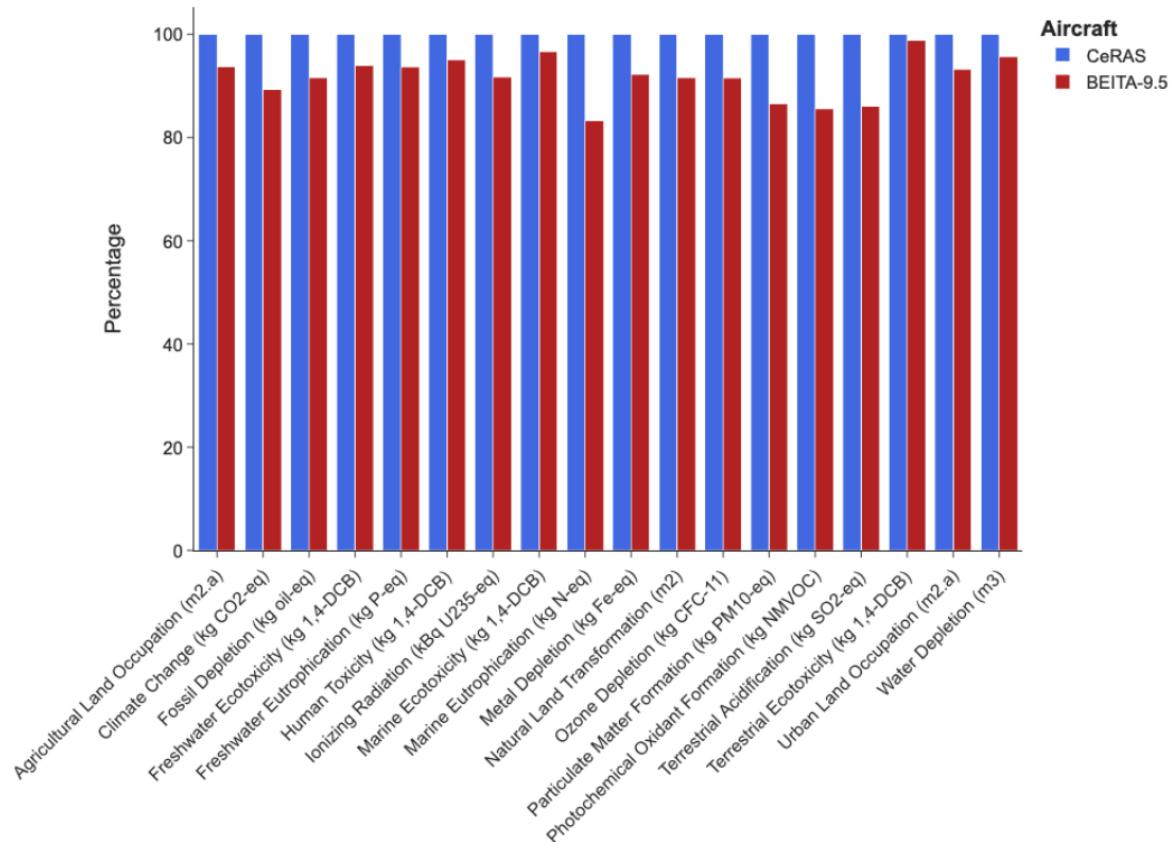
Midpoint results for different fuels – Kerosene and HEFA biofuels, normalized on kerosene impacts



- Not all feedstocks are equal...
- **Palm oil** higher impact on climate change induced by deforestation
- **Used cooking oil** has better potential overall

Case study – LCA of passenger aircraft

Comparison of two aircraft designs on midpoint impacts



Assumptions

- Two aircraft concepts:
 - CeRAS (reference aircraft similar to A320)
 - BEITA architecture :
 - Ultra-High Bypass Ratio (UHBR) Turbofan
 - Electrified Environmental Control System (ECS)
 - Electro-thermal Ice Protection System (IPS)
- Both are sized for the same mission reqs.: 2500 nm & 150 pax
- ..and evaluated for an operating mission of 800 nm

Results

- 11% impact on climate change with UHBR turbofan & electrified auxiliary systems

Case study

Sectoral & prospective LCA of air transport

Case study – Sectoral & Prospective LCA

Previous case study was focused on the impacts of a single aircraft operating at time t



What about the impacts at the sectoral level, i.e. considering a fleet of aircraft?

→ **Sectoral LCA**

How will these impacts evolve over the next decades?

→ **Prospective LCA**

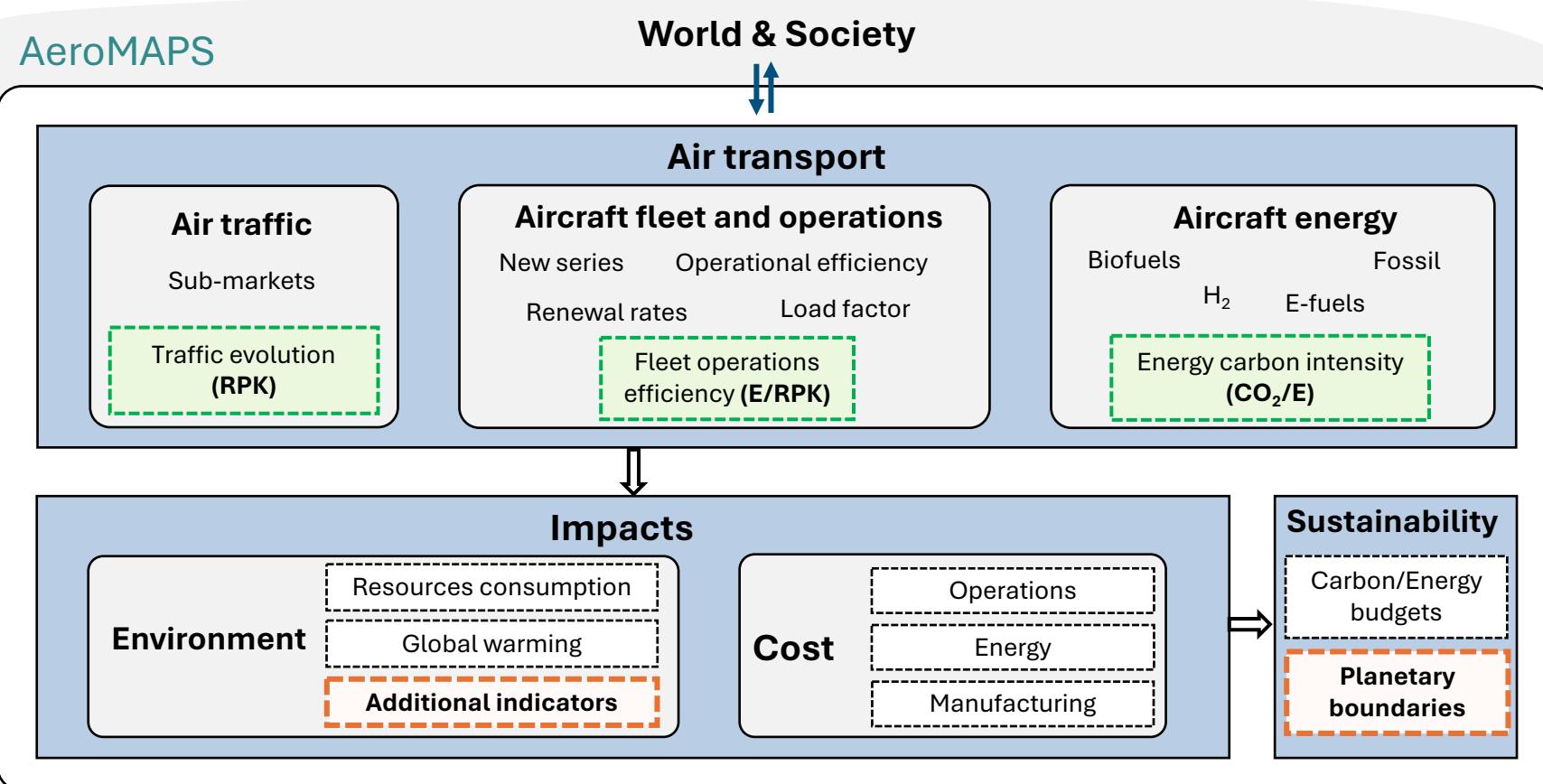
Case study – Sectoral & Prospective LCA

Numerous publications of air transport **prospective** scenarios...

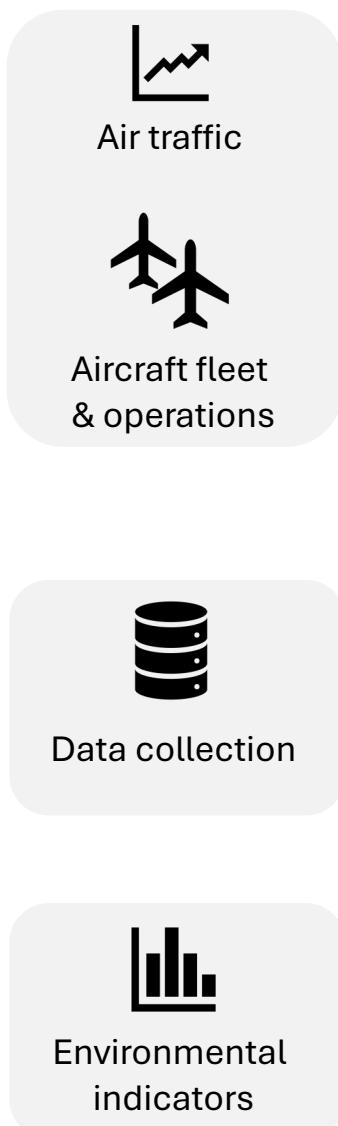


... But focused on climate change. What about other impacts?

Case study – Sectoral & Prospective LCA



Case study – Sectoral & Prospective LCA



+3% per year

- New architectures with 20% efficiency gains in 2035
- 6.1% operational gains 2020 → 2050
- 82.4 → 85% load factor increase in 2050

- Scientific literature
 - Ecoinvent data projected in the future to account for evolutions in technologies and energy mix supporting the development of aviation
- Assuming historical trends in human development
→ And no specific climate policies



Energy mix

Scenario 1 - Fossil

100% fossil kerosene

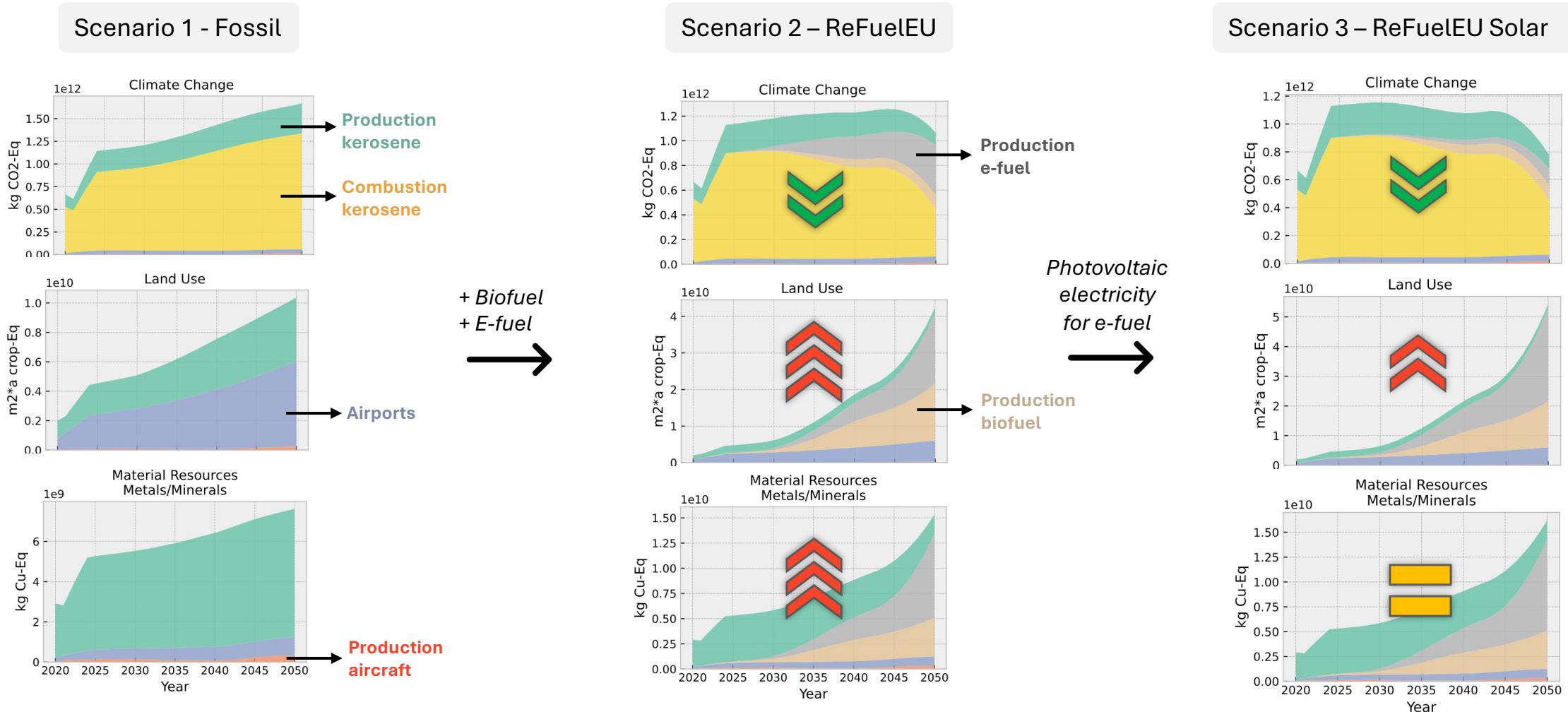
Scenario 2 - ReFuelEU

	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	
Fossil	94%	80%	66%	58%	30%	[forest residues]
Biofuels	4.8%	15%	24%	27%	35%	
E-fuels	1.2%	5%	10%	15%	35%	[grid electricity]

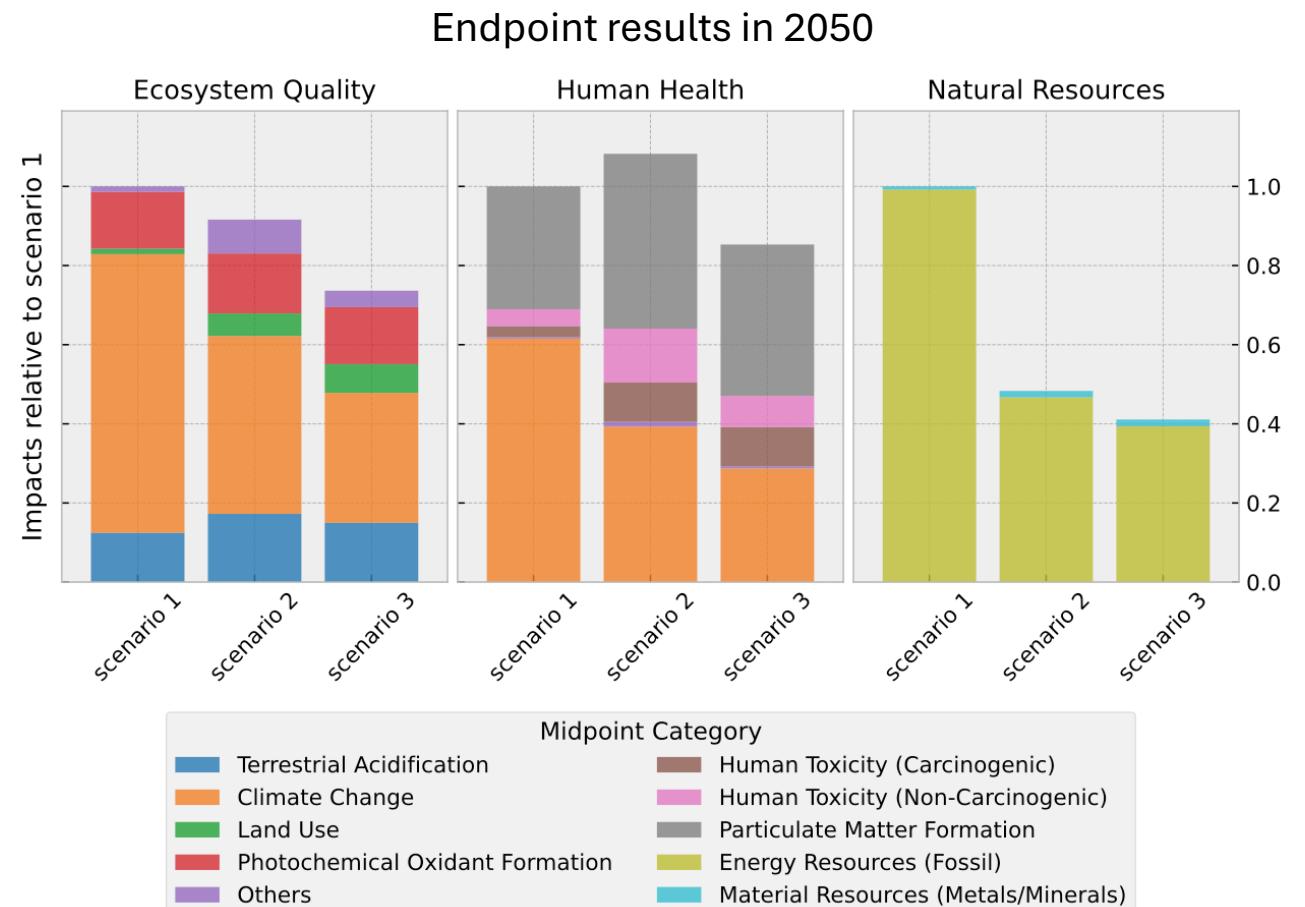
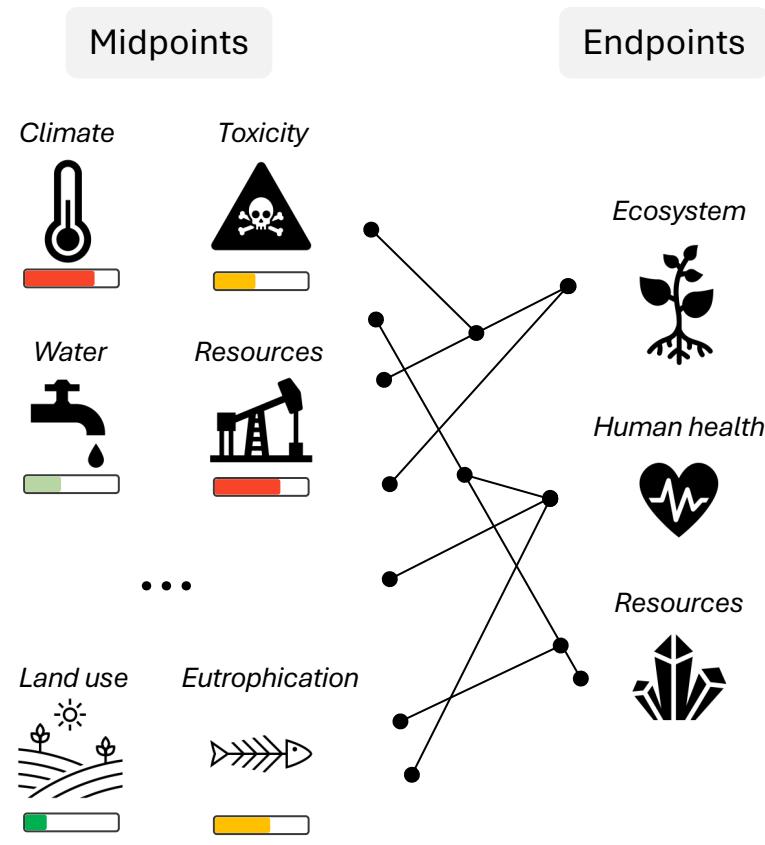
Scenario 3 – ReFuelEU Solar

ReFuelEU with e-fuels produced from photovoltaic electricity

Case study – Sectoral & Prospective LCA



Case study – Sectoral & Prospective LCA



Case study – Sectoral & Prospective LCA

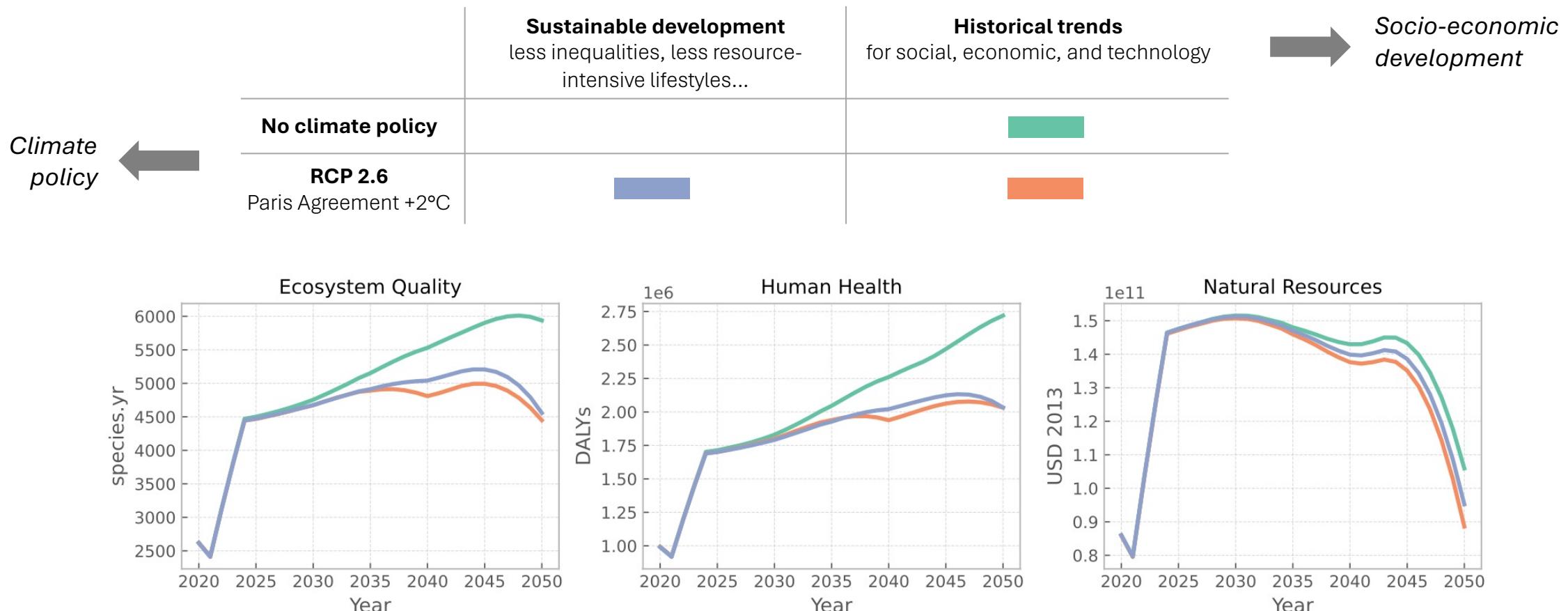


Fig.: Endpoint results for Scenario 2 (ReFuelEU) and different evolutions of human development

Course Contents

- o Introduction
- o The 4 steps of LCA
 - Goal and scope definition
 - Inventory
 - Impact assessment
 - Interpretation
- o Tools & Databases
- o Case studies
 - Eco-design of a drone
 - LCA of passenger aircraft
 - Sectoral LCA of air transport
- o Planetary boundaries
- o Conclusion and Q&A

Absolute Environmental Sustainability Assessment (AESAs)

In the introduction of this course, LCA was presented as a systematic and holistic method to estimate the **environmental impacts**, as consequences of **human-driven** environmental pressures.

However, although LCA supports the evaluation of the potential impacts of a product or a system, and a comparison in terms of eco-efficiency, **this is not enough to define how sustainable they are beyond relative terms.**



This requires the identification of **absolute sustainability references** against which assessing the impacts.

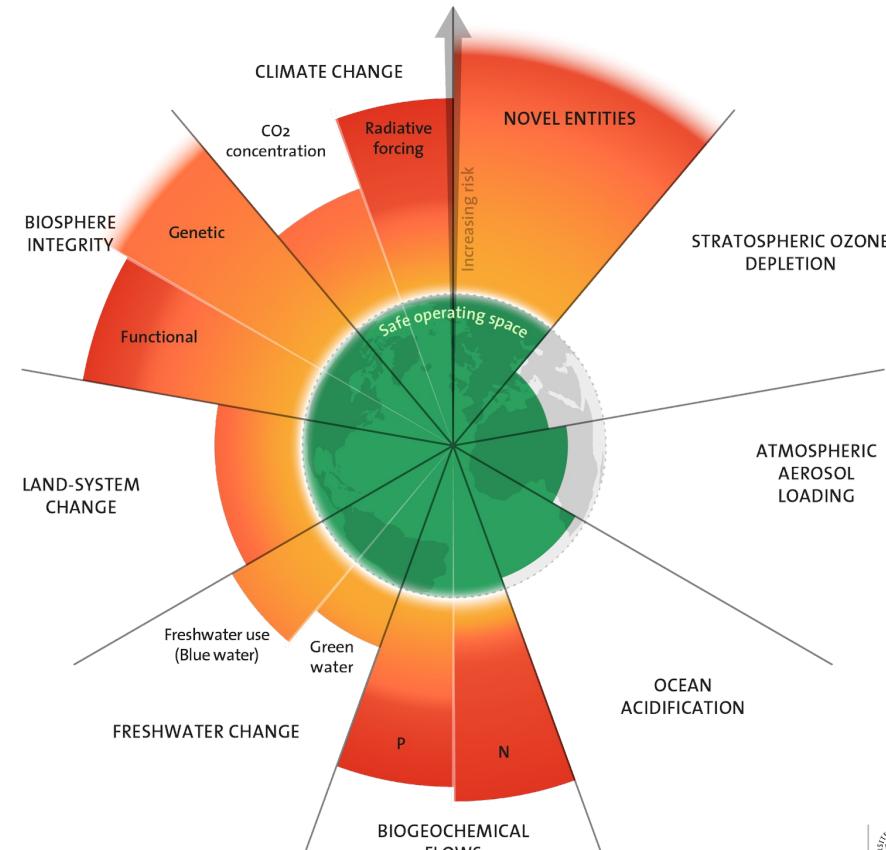
Better

Good enough

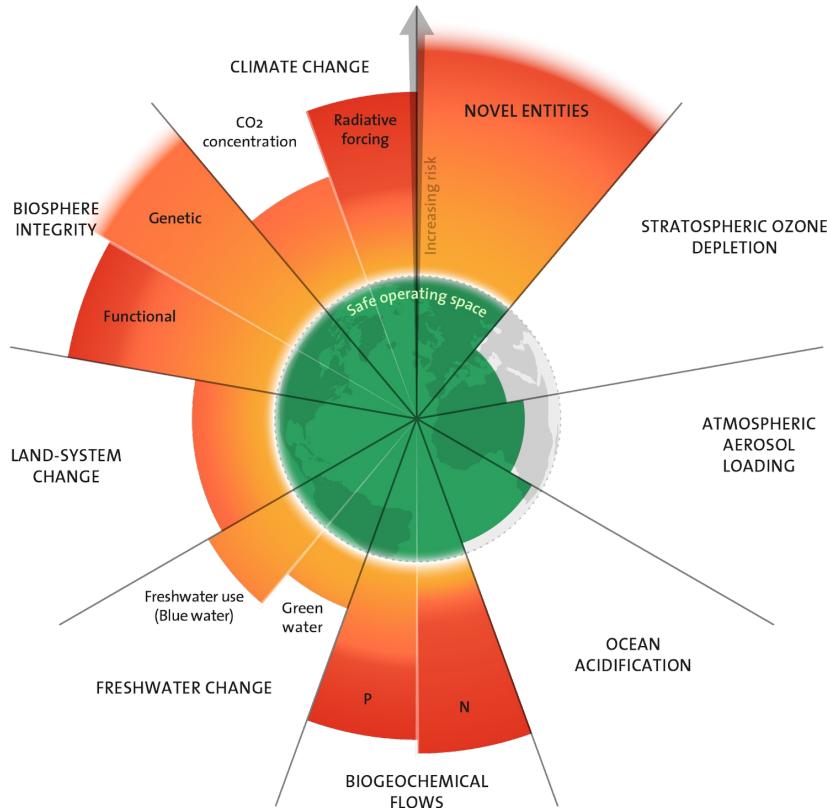
The concept of Planetary Boundaries

Planetary boundaries are a framework to describe thresholds to the impacts of human activities on the Earth system.

Beyond these thresholds, the environment may not be able to self-regulate and Earth system would leave the period of stability of the Holocene, in which human society developed.



Integrating PBs into LCA - (1) through updated LCIA methods



Climate change –
Radiative forcing

Stratospheric
ozone depletion

LCIA methods expressing PBs

New impact categories

EF-LCIA impact category

Climate change

Ozone depletion
Land use
Water resource depletion
Photochemical ozone formation
Freshwater eutrophication
Marine eutrophication
Acidification, Particulate matter, Human toxicity...

PB-LCIA impact category

Climate change – CO₂ concentration
Climate change – Radiative forcing
Ocean acidification
Stratospheric ozone depletion
Land-system change
Freshwater change
Atmospheric aerosol loading
Biogeochemical flows – P
Biogeochemical flows – N

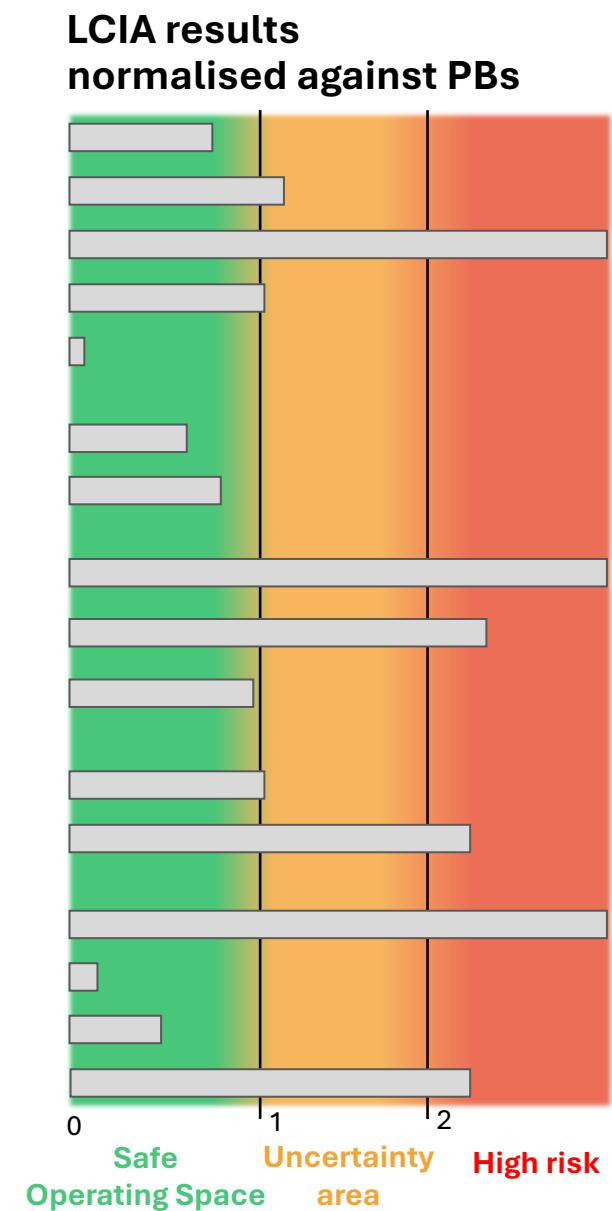
New characterization factors

Environmental flow	Emission compartment	Characterization factor	Unit
CO ₂	Air	3.53×10^{-13}	W yr m ⁻² kg ⁻¹
CO ₂ , land transformation	Air	1.18×10^{-15}	W m ⁻² kg ⁻¹
CH ₄	Air	1.59×10^{-12}	W yr m ⁻² kg ⁻¹
N ₂ O	Air	4.64×10^{-11}	W yr m ⁻² kg ⁻¹
CO	Air	2.74×10^{-13}	W yr m ⁻² kg ⁻¹
NM VOC, hydrocarbons	Air	1.06×10^{-12}	W yr m ⁻² kg ⁻¹
CFC-11	Air	7.85×10^{-9}	DU yr kg ⁻¹
CFC-12	Air	7.34×10^{-9}	DU yr kg ⁻¹
CFC-113	Air	4.91×10^{-9}	DU yr kg ⁻¹
Halon- 1211	Air	5.16×10^{-8}	DU yr kg ⁻¹
Halon-1301	Air	1.15×10^{-7}	DU yr kg ⁻¹
CFC-10, Carbon Tetrachloride	Air	5.74×10^{-9}	DU yr kg ⁻¹
HCFC-140, 1,1,1-Trichloroethane	Air	1.32×10^{-9}	DU yr kg ⁻¹

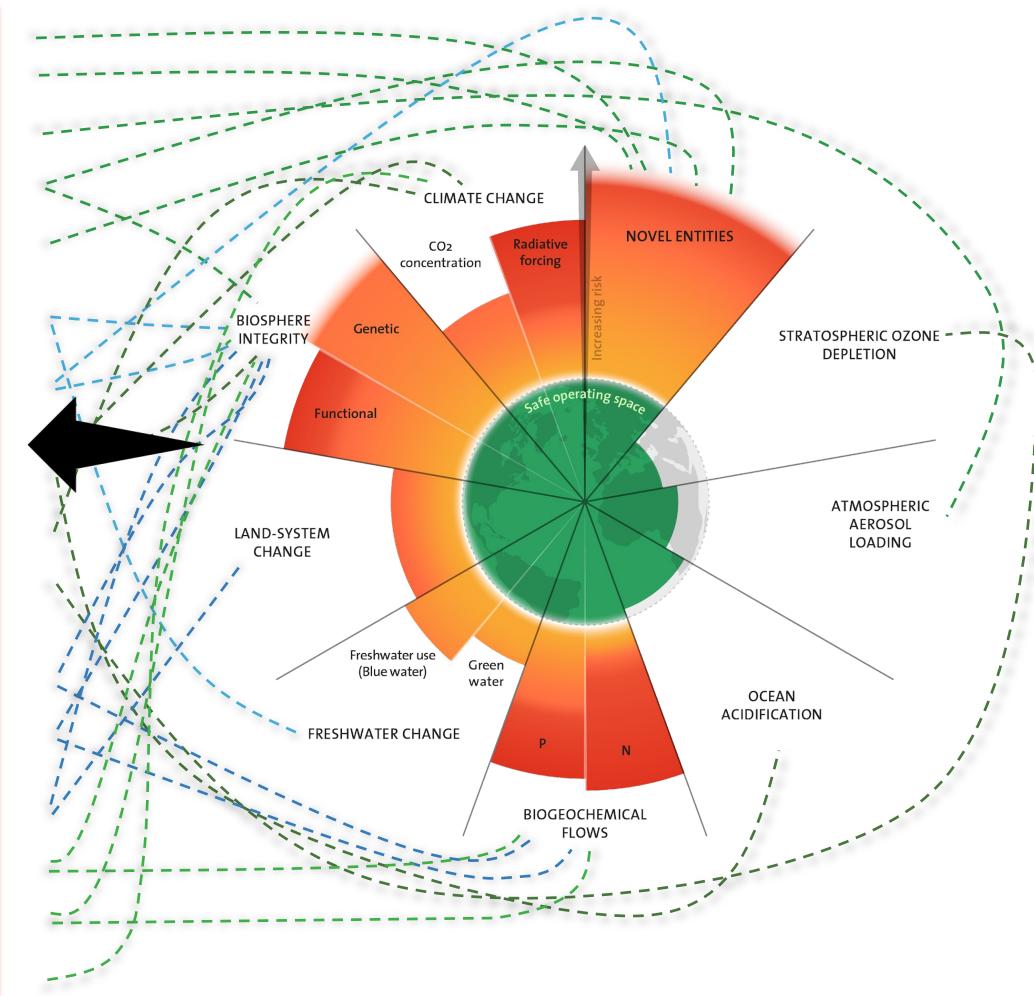
Integrating PBs into LCA - (2) through normalisation of the results

Sustainable Development Goals

LCA impact categories (Environmental Footprint method)	
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	Human toxicity, cancer
	Human toxicity, non cancer
	Particulate matter
	Photochemical ozone formation
	Ionising radiation
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	Water use
	Ecotoxicity, freshwater
13 CLIMATE ACTION	Climate change
	Resource use, fossil
	Ozone depletion
14 LIFE BELOW WATER	Eutrophication, marine
	Eutrophication, freshwater
	Land use
	Eutrophication, terrestrial
	Acidification
15 LIFE ON LAND	Resource use, minerals and metals

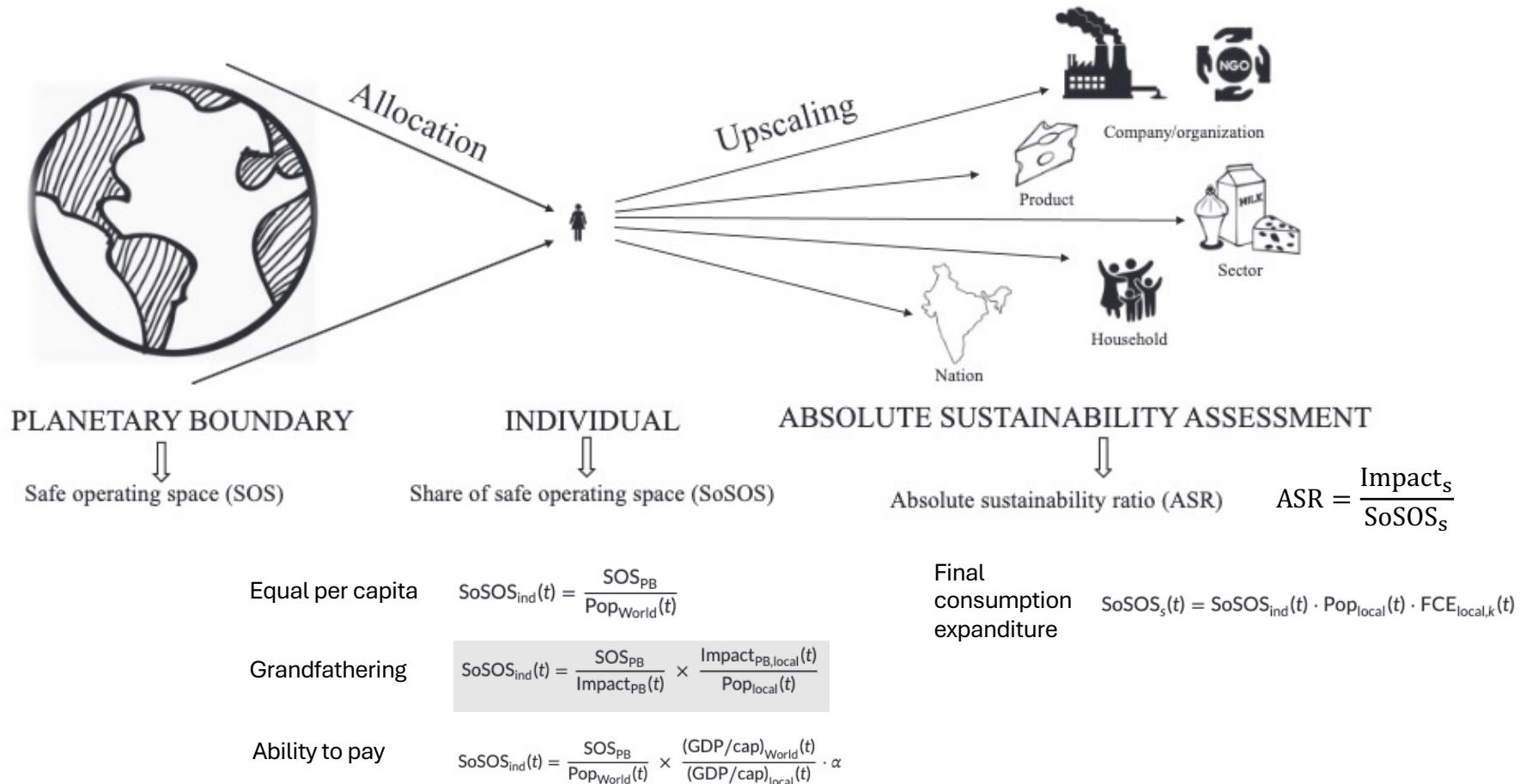


Planetary Boundaries



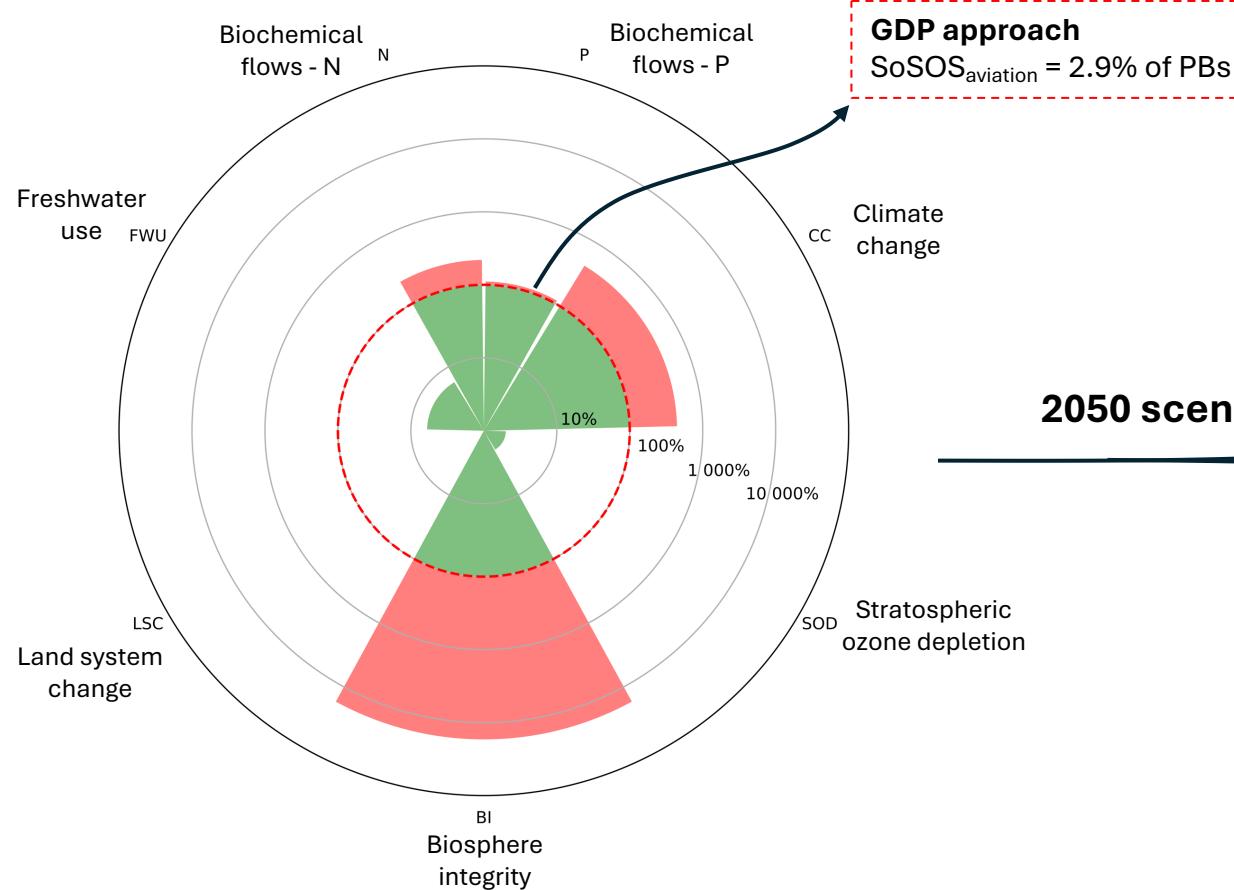
Budget allocation

Whatever the approach chosen, a **budget** must be **allocated** to the system (product, service, industry, country) that is assessed.

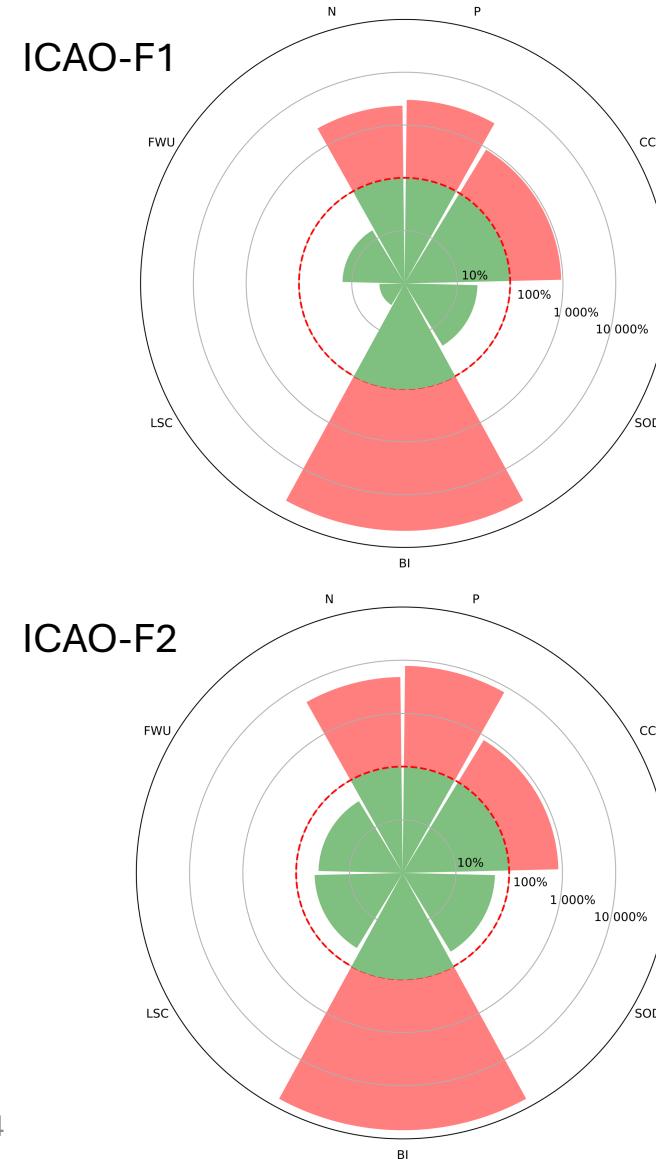


Application to aviation

Current aviation



Commercial air transport cannot be qualified as absolutely sustainable with a GDP-based sharing principle.





Questions?