

2026

Designing Solutions vs. Shifting the Problem

*Using Life Cycle Management
to Anticipate Consequences
and Shape Sustainable
Regional Innovation*

Presented by
FSLCI



Life Cycle Summer School

August 26–29 

Malmö 

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Introduction

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to announce the Life Cycle Summer School 2026 (LCSS 2026), the 15th edition in the renowned series under the broader program "Driving regional sustainable transformation through life cycle management". This year, we turn our focus to the theme: Using Life Cycle Management to Anticipate Consequences and Shape Sustainable Regional Innovation.



Fritz Balkau
Chair of Organizing Committee

Around the world, regions are racing to support innovation, fueled by the urgent need for sustainable transitions in energy, mobility, and resource management.

While this drive for progress is essential, it comes with a critical dilemma: Are we truly solving our regional challenges, or are we merely moving them elsewhere? As we push for rapid transitions, the risk of "burden shifting" — transferring environmental or social costs to different life cycle stages, from one local sector to another, to distant geographies, and often across time to future generations — has never been higher.

In this edition of our LCSS, we will explore how Life Cycle Management (LCM) serves as the essential framework for anticipating consequences and shaping responsible regional development. We will move from siloed perspectives toward systems thinking, focusing on better problem framing to ensure we are targeting root causes rather than just treating local symptoms. Using a life cycle lens, we can map out downstream effects and anticipate how today's "green" choices might lead to rebound effects or technological lock-ins that hinder long-term progress.

Over the course of four days, the program features a blend of expert-led presentations, hands-on workshops, and interactive sessions designed to foster systemic thinking and collaborative problem-solving. Join us, and you will also have the opportunity to showcase your own research or regional projects, gaining valuable insights and feedback from a network of peers and experts.

We warmly invite you to join us from August 26 to 29, 2026 in Malmö, Sweden. Together, we will work to ensure that the regional innovations of today contribute to a truly balanced and sustainable future. Apply now and become part of the conversation.

Sincerely,

Fritz Balkau
Chair of the Organizing Committee

Summary

KEY INFORMATION

- LCSS 2026 offers in-depth insights into the application of life cycle approaches to support the development of sustainable innovation, with a focus on cities and regions.
- Participants will gain knowledge of Life Cycle Management (LCM) and Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) tools from a holistic perspective, learning how these tools can design regional innovation solutions that align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and prevent burden shifting.
- The program includes expert presentations, case study analyses, interactive discussions, hands-on workshops, and opportunities for participants to present their own work, receive peer feedback, and engage in horizontal exchange.
- LCSS 2026 welcomes a maximum of 30 participants from around the world

REGISTRATION

Registration is open to:

- Regional and municipal officials and their technical advisors
- (Under)graduate students
- Young professionals and researchers under 40 interested in applying life cycle approaches in their field

500€

Students (S) and regional officials

650€

Young professionals (YP)

Discounts

- FSLCI Members : 30€ (S) / 120€ (YP)
- Non-OECD Countries : Financial support

Registration Fee Includes:

- Access to all lectures, workshops, webinars, and networking events
- Full access to the LCSS online collaboration platform and online course materials
- 4 catered lunches during the Summer School
- 1 Networking Dinner

APPLY NOW



THEME

Designing Solutions vs. Shifting the Problem: Using Life Cycle Management to Anticipate Consequences and Shape Sustainable Regional Innovation

Regions play a pivotal role in creating the conditions under which innovation thrives – through policy frameworks, investment decisions, institutional partnerships, and the governance structures that shape what gets built, scaled, and sustained. Yet this enabling role comes with responsibility: regional actors must not only foster innovation, but actively steer it toward outcomes that are ecologically sound, socially equitable, and long-term viable. A significant gap exists in regional development today – innovation is frequently measured by short-term economic or functional success, without accounting for the "problem shifting" that occurs when impacts are pushed further down the supply chain or into different ecological categories.

In response to these dynamics, this program champions a holistic life cycle perspective. With 17 interconnected SDGs at stake, life cycle thinking is vital for sustainable, preventive decision-making at the regional level. We focus on how LCM can anticipate critical consequences before decisions are locked in – equipping participants to assess innovations before they scale and to design solutions in harmony with systems, resources, and society.

This program expands the conversation to include the practical application of life cycle management (LCM) in public administration – addressing a key gap between LCA research and the complex realities of regional governance. Through deep dives into regional ecosystems, we will uncover how stakeholders can collaborate to identify potential pitfalls before they are locked into the infrastructure.

FACULTY

CORE FACULTY



Fritz Balkau
Sustainable solutions, France



Jens Johansson
IVL, Sweden



Dr. Guido Sonnemann
University of Bordeaux, France



Dr. Naeem Adibi
weLOOP, France



Dr. Tomas Rydberg
IVL, Sweden



Dr. Alberto Bezama
University of Calgary, Canada

Additional invited experts will also contribute to the program, with some of their sessions delivered virtually.

Join Us

WHAT YOU BRING

Whether you're an undergraduate, doctoral, or post-doctoral student, a young professional, or a researcher under 40 - LCSS 2026 is for you. We invite anyone who brings curiosity, knowledge, and a drive to shape the future through life cycle thinking, innovation, and sustainable development to join us. If you're a policymaker or part of a regional institution working on economic and environmental innovation, your perspective is just as essential. Come ready to share your ideas, build connections, and collaborate with others who are passionate about creating impactful change.

WHAT YOU LEAVE WITH

By joining our Life Cycle Summer School in person, you gain direct access to leading experts in the field, engage in hands-on sessions and discussions, and build meaningful connections with an international network of peers, researchers, and professionals—fostering collaboration, inspiration, and career opportunities in life cycle thinking and sustainability.

Core Concepts

This toolkit is designed to enable participants to screen innovation before implementation

- LCA and LCM as Strategic Partners for innovation
- Systems Thinking vs. Silo Thinking
- Problem Framing: Targeting Root Causes vs. Point-Source Symptoms
- Prospective Life Cycle Assessment
- Consequential Thinking: Indirect Upstream and Downstream Effects
- Rebound Effects and Historical Pattern Analysis
- Technological Lock-in and the Tyranny of Interim Solutions
- Time Scales and Path Dependency in Regional Innovation
- Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) and Strategic Scaling
- Social LCA (S-LCA) and Stakeholder Impact Mapping

PREVIOUS EDITIONS

FEEDBACK

„I liked it a lot. The program was quite intense but I really enjoyed the discussions and I think we have learned a lot!“

„It was really nice because there were different types of workshops, presentations, live seminars, exercises with the team etc. It was also very dynamic with a lot of discussions so it was very interesting.“

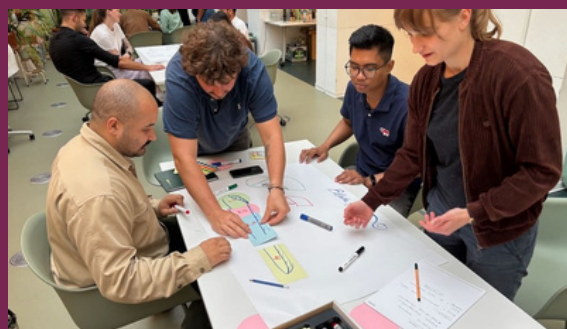
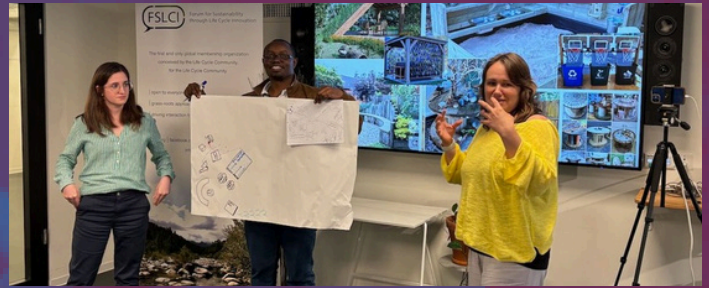
„It was a very good learning experience, sometimes I was a bit frustrated by the workshops because I wanted to discuss every point for three days, instead of twenty minutes, but that’s just indicative of the subject and how much one can learn.“

„I loved it. I think it was really worth my time (...) it helped me to see what’s happening currently in the sustainability / LCA community but also showcased the challenges with management and implementation and how important the political and social aspects are.“

All students rated the knowledge of speakers to be excellent. 100% of our students had their expectations met or exceeded and would recommend the Summer School to others! The ratio between lectures and interactive workshops was rated by all students to be very appropriate or just right.

2025 Highlights

14th edition



ABOUT US

This event is hosted by The Forum for Sustainability through Life Cycle Innovation e.V. (FSLCI), a multi-stakeholder and membership-based organization for professionals working in business, science and policy organizations who are interested in and working with Life Cycle approaches to enhance the sustainability of economic activities. The FSLCI organizes workshops, summer schools, webinars and other events around life cycle innovation and offers a global life cycle community platform for the life cycle community.

Originally, the Summer School program was self-managed, but the FSLCI has now taken charge to ensure its continued success and growth. As the driving force behind the event, the FSLCI meticulously curates and oversees every aspect—from the program content to the smooth execution—ensuring each edition provides valuable insights and fosters meaningful connections within the regional sustainability and circular economy community.

Join us in Malmö, Sweden from August 26 – 29, 2026, to experience firsthand the expertise and passion that FSLCI brings to advancing life cycle management and advancing sustainable regional innovation practices.

More information on the event as well as the FSLCI are available on our website.

LEARN MORE 



Forum for Sustainability
through Life Cycle Innovation

