



sustainability consulting + software

Elementary Flow Harmonization with openLCA and the LCA Harmonization Tool

Wesley Ingwersen, US EPA; Andreas Ciroth, GreenDelta 4th Meeting of the International Forum on LCA cooperation, Shah Alam, Malaysia, March 2015

Office of Research and Development National Risk Management Research Laboratory, Sustainable Technology Division, Systems Analysis Branch



Content

- Background: Need for harmonization in LCA
- LCA Harmonization Tool
- JSON-LD Exchange Format
- Status & Outlook





Acknowledgements

- Tom Transue (Lockheed Martin), Lead Developer, LCA Harmonization Tool
- Michael Srocka (GreenDelta), Lead Developer, openLCA
- David Meyer, Matthew Bergman (US EPA)
- Ezra Kahn, Peter Arbuckle (USDA)

Background: The need for harmonization in LCA



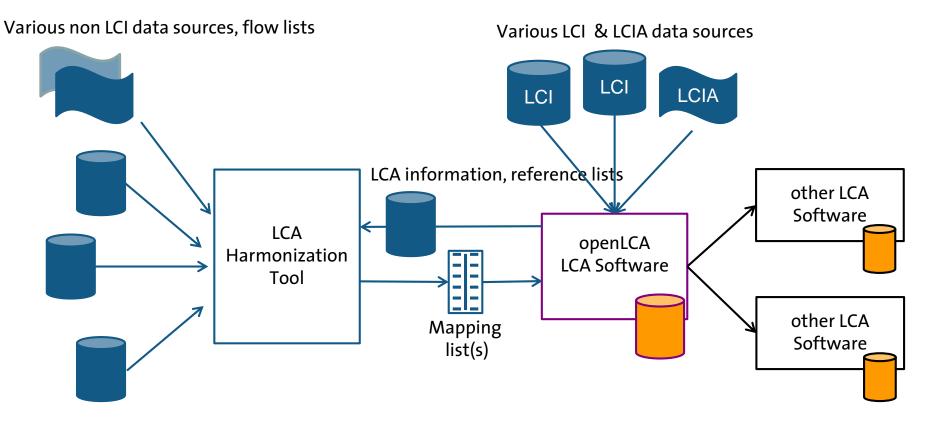
Background

- Experience with problems combining LCA data from multiple sources, which is essential for modelling (in a data scarce field)
- Recognition of lack of consistent nomenclature, and definition of elementary flows in these datasets
- Increasing potential for new and various data sources to be used in LCA → automated support for harmonization extremely desirable

Vision and concept for a harmonization tool



Harmonization Tool & data flow



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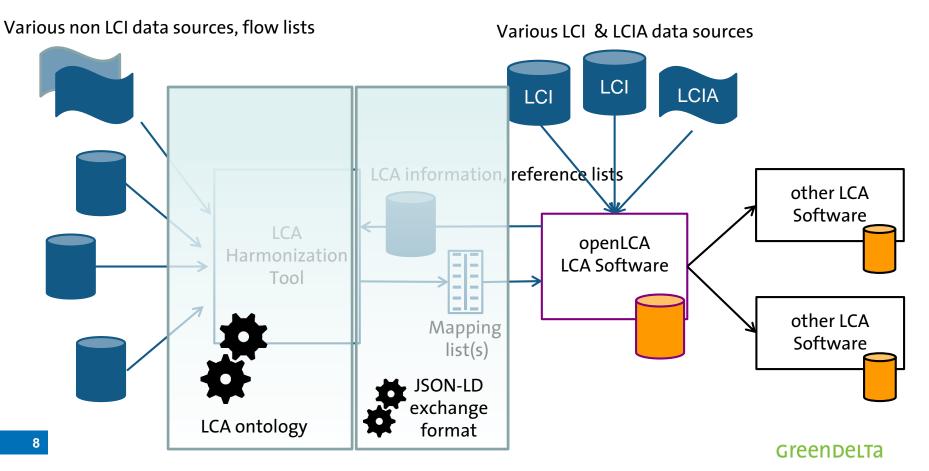


LCA Harmonization Tool (LCA-HT)

- Developed internally by EPA with support from USDA
- Java-based (PC and Mac compatible)
- Independent but direct exchange with openLCA
- Indirect exchange with other LCA software via standard exchange formats (ILCD, ecospold)
- To be freely available
- Built on a semantic web architecture (Resource Description Framework)



Harmonization Tool & data flow



The harmonization tool more in detail



LCA Harmonization Tool (LCA-HT)

- Ontology to structure and process / infer relations between LCA elements → flexible and powerful, and thus able to deal with a multitude of various data sources
- Reference and Master lists stored in RDF (ontology data format) in the tool
- User can choose this master list or their own master list
- Additions can be made to the master list from imported data

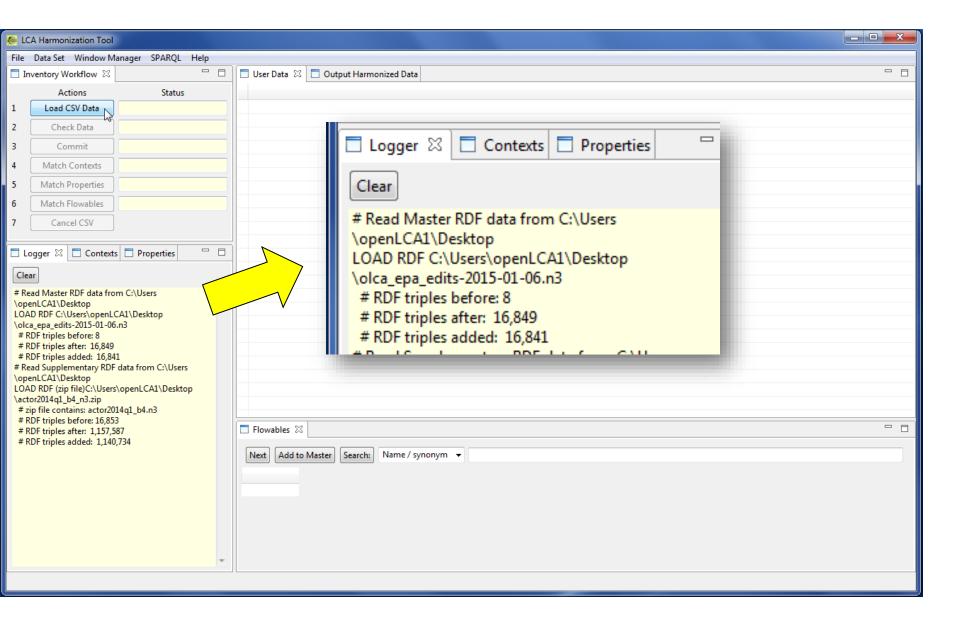


Progress to date

- Match list of elementary flows (chemicals, resources) from .txt or openLCA with a master list
- Automated matching by name and CAS, also permits match by search string
- Various match types defined including exact, superset/subset, proxy, and not a match
- Export original list along with matched flows to .txt
- Permits addition to master list

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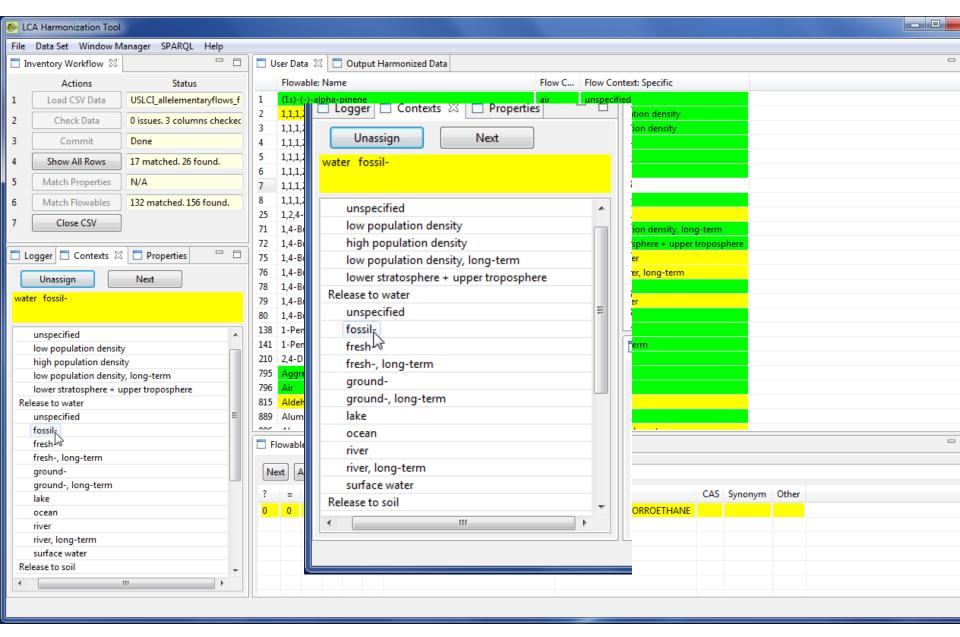
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Actions Status				Flowable: Name	Elaw C	Flow Context: Specific							
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3	Commit	10%	3	1,1,1,2-TETRACHLORROETHANE	air	low population density							
2	Commit	10 %	4	1,1,1,2-TETRACHLORROETHANE	soil	forestry							
4	Match Contexts	11 matched. 16 found.	5	1,1,1,2-TETRACHLORROETHANE	soil	industrial							
5	Match Properties	N/A	6	1,1,1,2-TETRACHLORROETHANE	soil	unspecified							
-			7	1,1,1,2-TETRACHLORROETHANE	water	fossil-							
6	Match Flowables	14 matched. 18 found.	8	1,1,1,2-TETRACHLORROETHANE	water	ocean							
7	Close CSV		9	1,1,1,3,3-Pentafluoropropane, HFC-245fa	air	unspecified							
			10	1,1,2,2-Tetrachloroethane	air	high population density							
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# R	DF triples added: 1,140	,734	16	1,1,2,2-Tetrachloroethane	water	ocean							
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File	File Data Set Window Manager SPARQL Help														
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LCA-HT Next Steps for Beta Release

- Consolidate Master list
 - Currently using openLCA 1.4.1 master list
 - Will curate to improve consistency; remove redundancy
- Implement LCIA harmonization in tool

JSON-LD as new data exchange format



openLCA connects with the LCA-HT via JSON-LD. Why?





openLCA connects with the LCA-HT via JSON-LD. Why?

- JSON-LD: "JavaScript Object Notation for Linked Data", lightweight, short, W3C recommended for linked data (14 January 2014)
- Can directly read from and also write to ontologies (RDF format)
- Lightweight, human-readable, Google and Yahoo are supporters
- Modern (2010)

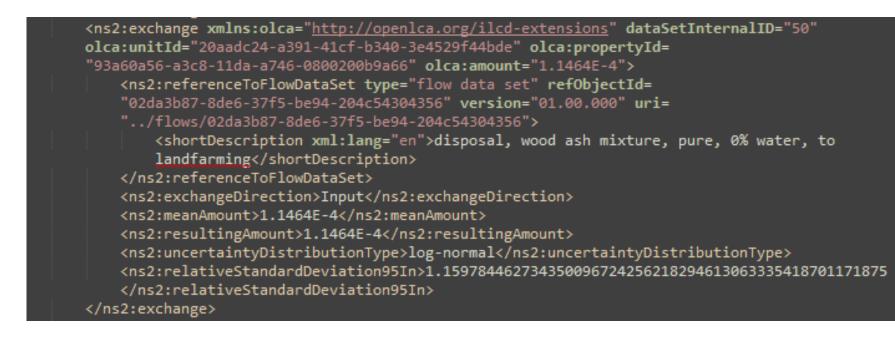


openLCA connects with the LCA-HT via JSON-LD. Why?

- →(We think) a very useful alternative to XML (i.e., EcoSpold, EcoSpold2, ILCD)
- →Helps overcome shortcomings of existing LCA data formats, and can fully replace them
- →Overcomes also shortcomings of Ontology triple-store data, more efficient and faster
- Is implemented as one import/ export format in current openLCA 1.4.1 release



ILCD format, process data set, one exchange: disposal wood ash mixture, export from openLCA





JSON-LD openLCA format, process data set, one exchange: disposal wood ash mixture

```
"@type": "Exchange",
"avoidedProduct": false,
"input": true,
"amount": 1.1464E-4,
"flow": {
    "@type": "Flow",
    "@id": "d52f395a-a097-3cd5-b4d5-f0fb981745ec",
    "@id": "20aadc24-a391-41cf-b340-3e4529f44bde",
},
"flowProperty": {
    "@id": "93a60a56-a3c8-11da-a746-0800200b9a66",
"uncertainty": {
    "@type": "Uncertainty",
    "distributionType": "LOG NORMAL DISTRIBUTION",
    "geomMean": 1.1464E-4,
    "geomSd": 1.15978446273435
```





JSON-LD: Annotations

"distributionType": "LOG_NORMAL_DISTRIBUTION", "geomMean": 1.1464E-4, "geomSd": 1.15978446273435

ILCD: Markups

<ns2:meanAmount>1.1464E-4</ns2:meanAmount> <ns2:resultingAmount>1.1464E-4</ns2:resultingAmount> <ns2:uncertaintyDistributionType>log-normal</ns2:uncertaintyDistribution <ns2:relativeStandardDeviation95In>1.15978446273435009672425621829461306 </ns2:relativeStandardDeviation95In>



Status, outlook, discussion



Status

- LCA-HT: About to be released as beta-version, free and open source tool, summer 2015, including mapping lists and ontology
- JSON-LD: Established in openLCA as first implementation for LCA data exchange, including an implicit ontology



Outlook and discussion

- (I think) Both LCA-HT and JSON-LD are a major step forward, ...
- ... and both need to be carefully discussed with stakeholders





Outlook and discussion

- JSON-LD for LCA data exchange could help
 - Link ontologies to LCA data in a efficient and practical way
 - Overcome existing shortcomings of individual LCA data formats (and data format interoperability) as one commonly acceptable meta format
- Reference implementation available in openLCA, free and open source → "inspiration" for LCA software and database developers



Outlook and discussion



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Disclaimer

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through its Office of Research and Development partially collaborated in the research described here. It has not been subject to Agency review and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Agency. No official endorsement should be inferred.

Thank you very much!

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