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## **UN Report Recognizes Life Cycle Assessment Work of EAFA**

A new report, from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has used a number of Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs) undertaken by the European Aluminium Foil Association (EAFA), in a wide ranging, in depth, report to understand best practice in using LCA as an assessment tool for packaging.

The report, produced under the Life Cycle Initiative - a joint organisation of UNEP and the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) - summarizes the results of a project designed to consolidate outcomes of existing research on the environmental performance of packaging, namely LCA studies, in order to demonstrate the value of applying LCAs to evaluate environmental impacts for food and beverage packaging.

Aluminium foil, with its proven barrier properties against light, gas, moisture and odours has long been at the forefront of food and beverage packaging developments to achieve extended shelf-life and improved ambient shelf performance.

Stefan Glimm, the Executive Director of EAFA said, "We are extremely proud that eight of the LCA studies EAFA has undertaken over the last 5 years were considered good enough to be included as examples of best practise by the UNEP/SETAC team for inclusion in this project. We strongly believe in the values of including all life cycle stages because it prevents the decision maker from inadvertently shifting the environmental burdens from one stage to another. It also ensures that potential impacts at all stages of the life cycle are accounted for."

Using knowledge mining techniques the UNEP report showed that when conducting a life cycle assessment on food and beverage packaging it is important to consider the full cradle-to-grave impact of the packaging system in order to ensure the analysis accounts for all potential system impacts. Omitting one or more life cycle stages can potentially lead to the selection of a package design that appears to have the lowest impact, but is associated with the highest burden when the full cradle-to-grave LCA is evaluated.

A clear aim of the report was to demonstrate why a life cycle perspective, when evaluating the environmental impact of food and beverage packaging, is effective. Stefan Glimm added, "The fact that the study conclusions are recognised and endorsed by UNEP really adds to their credibility. At EAFA we will continue to use LCA to demonstrate the value that aluminium foil and foil containing packaging deliver to help make lives more sustainable. In all of our studies to date LCA has helped to show how foil packaging is part of the solutions in the battle to reduce food waste and in realising a resource efficient society."

*The final report for the UNEP SETAC study can be downloaded here [http://www.lifecycleinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/food\\_packaging\\_4.11.13\\_HQ.pdf](http://www.lifecycleinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/food_packaging_4.11.13_HQ.pdf)*

*Executive summaries of the EAFA LCA studies used in the knowledge mining are available here <http://www.alufoil.org/food-lifecycle-studies.html>*

### **Further information:**

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*The European Aluminium Foil Association is the international body representing companies engaged in the rolling and rewinding of alufoil and in the manufacture of aluminium closures, alufoil semi-rigid containers and of all kind of flexible packaging. Its more than 100 members include companies in Western, Central and Eastern Europe.*