

Addressing the Social Dimension of Reuse in the Construction Sector within Social and Solidarity Enterprises with S-LCA

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The built environment contributes to about 40% of the global construction and demolition waste, highlighting the urgent need to switch from the linear « take-make-dispose » approach to a circular economic model within this sector. While the Circular Economy (CE) offers a promising pathway toward sustainability and ecological transition, current CE approaches tend to emphasize technical and economic dimensions, while giving limited attention to the social one. This imbalance raises concerns about the inclusiveness and the long-term sustainability of current circular practices in the construction sector. Among these practices, *reuse* stands out for its potential to reduce environmental impacts and waste production and extend material life cycles while also fostering collaboration among stakeholders.

Despite the lack of formal recognition of reuse practices within current assessment frameworks, evidence from Belgium demonstrates that Social and Solidarity Enterprises (SSE), such as Casablanca, Retrival and Batiterre are integrating reuse into their construction projects. These organisations implement reuse practices to fulfil their core social mission while also promoting professional integration and training for individuals facing employment barriers. Although these early observations suggest the potential for significant social impacts from reuse practices, there remains a need to verify and formalise such findings within established assessment frameworks. This study aims to address this gap by identifying and examining the potential social impacts emerging from reuse practices, within the scope of Social Life Cycle Assessment (S-LCA).

The social impacts of reuse practices through a mixed-methods approach combining top-down and bottom-up components. The top-down analysis examines the applicability of existing S-LCA frameworks to reuse practices and develops an understanding of how Social and Solidarity Enterprises (SSEs) generate social value through reuse practices in the construction sector. In parallel, the bottom-up component involves in-situ observations and interviews with practitioners to identify and describe the social outcomes emerging from reuse activities.

Within the broader ambitions of the doctoral research, the findings of this study will serve as the foundation for developing an analytical framework linking reuse practices with social impact and value creation. Concurrently, this will also contribute to the advancement of S-LCA methodologies and therefore to a better understanding of the social dimension of circular transitions in the built environment.

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