Presentation of the BONSAI Board 2015-18

Prof. Bo Weidema, Chair
Founder of the BONSAI initiative. Professor at Aalborg University, committed to trans-disciplinary research that bridges economic, social, engineering and environmental sciences. With a background in the fair trade and sustainable agriculture movements, I have now 25 years of academic and consulting experience with environmental life cycle assessments. I developed the original SPOLD LCI dataformat in the 1990'ies, and worked from 2008 to 2014 as Executive Manager and Chief Scientist of the ecoinvent database.

My motivation for working with BONSAI is a realisation that an open community and crowd-sourcing approach, relying on the latest developments in data science and technology, is the only way we can ever obtain and maintain the amount and quality of data necessary for serious sustainability assessments of products.

Dr. Richard Wood, Vice-chair
I am a researcher at the Industrial Ecology Program at NTNU. My focus has been on modelling global systems of consumption and production with a focus on environmental and socio-economic outcomes, with particular consideration of the role of consumption and trade. I have experience in input-output (IO) analysis and associated techniques, and have played a role in the development of the EXIOBASE multi-regional input-output model. I am also currently working on hybrid life-cycle assessment, resource efficiency, and the possibilities for implementation of policy related to consumption based carbon accounting.

I'm interested in seeing greater leverage of the work done in IO modelling, and would like to see open research environments developed for his field so that higher quality and more relevant analysis can be used to help move to a more sustainable society. There has recently been strong interest in further development of global and regional IO models, and I believe there are strong synergies and opportunities in bringing this closer to life-cycle and product footprint analysis. There is a current lack of community approaches in this area, and I hope that we can make BONSAI into a leading open, user driven environment in which to push forward the empirical basis of environmental footprint and associated modelling over the next decades.

Dr. Pascal Lesage, Treasurer
I have been working as both consultant and researcher in the field of LCA for 15 years and am presently a research officer at the CIRAIG. My three core motivations in my LCA work align well with BONSAI's mission: (1) democratization of life cycle data and tools, allowing a greater use of life cycle information in decision-making; (2) more transparent consideration of uncertainty (and their specific sources) in life cycle models; and (3) development of data, tools and modelling approaches that allow a strategic and efficient increase of the robustness of life cycle information.

The combination of a top-down approach (using an IO framework to ensure completeness) and bottom-up approach (e.g. crowd-sourcing data collection, data harvesting), the focus on social involvement in data creation and review and, of course, the condition that the resulting data and approaches be free and open source, make BONSAI a unique and important initiative.

Dr.–Ing. Andreas Ciroth
I am founder and director of GreenDelta, and work since almost 20 years in sustainability life cycle approaches in research and consultancy, including environmental LCA and social LCA. At GreenDelta we develop the free and open source LCA software openLCA which is becoming increasingly used and which fits nicely to the idea of BONSAI to increase data availability. We have also created, with very little funds, a format converter to convert between LCA data formats to help overcome the sometimes heated debate about data formats.

I am personally very interested in increasing data interoperability and data availability for life cycle approaches and think the current ways of collecting, sharing and using information relevant for life cycle based decision support is really underdeveloped, and even embarrassing, seeing developments in other areas – so that the current practices can be done a lot better, for the benefit of all. I am happy to be able via BONSAI to contribute to these improvements and to shifting data availability and usage in life cycle approaches to more up to date practices.

Dr. Thomas Gloria
Managing Director of Industrial Ecology Consultants.
More than 20 years of professional experience in the
sustainability field. Board member of the ACLCA; member
of the USGBC Technical Advisory Panel for Environmental
Product Declarations; Vice-Chair of the International
Society of Industrial Ecology's Life Cycle Sustainability
Assessment Committee; serves on the GM Company
Sustainability Stakeholder Committee. Regularly lectures
for the Harvard University Extension School, Tufts
University, the Presidio Graduate School, and the
International Society of Sustainability Professionals.

I regard comparability as fundamental to the value of product environmental
footprints as a basis for decision-making. The lack of a truly open source
database is hampering progress to this end.