Thesis proposal - Life cycle thinking in small and medium sized companies

Background
The life cycle perspective and the use of life cycle assessment (LCA) as a tool for understanding the environmental impact from a product or service is common among larger companies. However, small and medium sized enterprises’ (SME) use of life cycle approaches are limited today. Future changes in for example ISO 14001, the introduction of EU Environmental Footprint and other regulations demanding life cycle based information might force a change to that together with increased pressure from customers. Most tools that are available today are developed to fit organizations with either inhouse ability to perform LCA or the financial muscles to buy that competence from consultants. SMEs in general lack both the competence in house and in some cases the ability to hire a consultant.

Questions
How well prepared are SMEs for the external and internal demands for life cycle based information? And what can other organisations do to help prepare SMEs, e.g., how can tools or approaches be adapted to be more applicable and available for SMEs and can larger companies support their suppliers? What can be learnt from e.g., implementation of the climate declaration for buildings in Sweden or other life cycle based regulations in other countries?

About Swedish Life Cycle Center
Swedish Life Cycle Center is a Center of Excellence and collaboration platform for academia, research institutes, industry and government agencies. It fosters competence-building and knowledge exchange in advancing and applying the life cycle field. Within a project, Innovation cluster for the life cycle perspective, that is managed by the center one focus area is to reach out to SMEs and increase the level of understanding and the use of the life cycle perspective. This thesis is a way to get a better understanding of the state of the art regarding SMEs use of the life cycle perspective.

Method
To get a broader understanding of SMEs preparations, understanding and need for support a questionnaire or interviews can be used or both in combination.

Student background
We are looking for students that are familiar with the life cycle perspective and life cycle assessment. You should feel comfortable to do interviews since that might the method that will be used.

Contact
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