

Life cycle thinking starter kit

A practical guide to begin sustainability
mapping in your organization



Sustainability starts with a shift in perspective

Life cycle thinking helps you see the full environmental picture of your product or service. For senior leaders, it offers a practical way to connect sustainability goals with business priorities, highlighting where action matters most.

This kit is a simple toolset to support early decisions, identify potential hotspots, and focus efforts that deliver real improvement.

Use it to:

- Frame strategic sustainability discussions across departments
- Identify data and visibility gaps
- Prioritize improvement areas for further analysis or investment



Where and how do we create environmental impact?

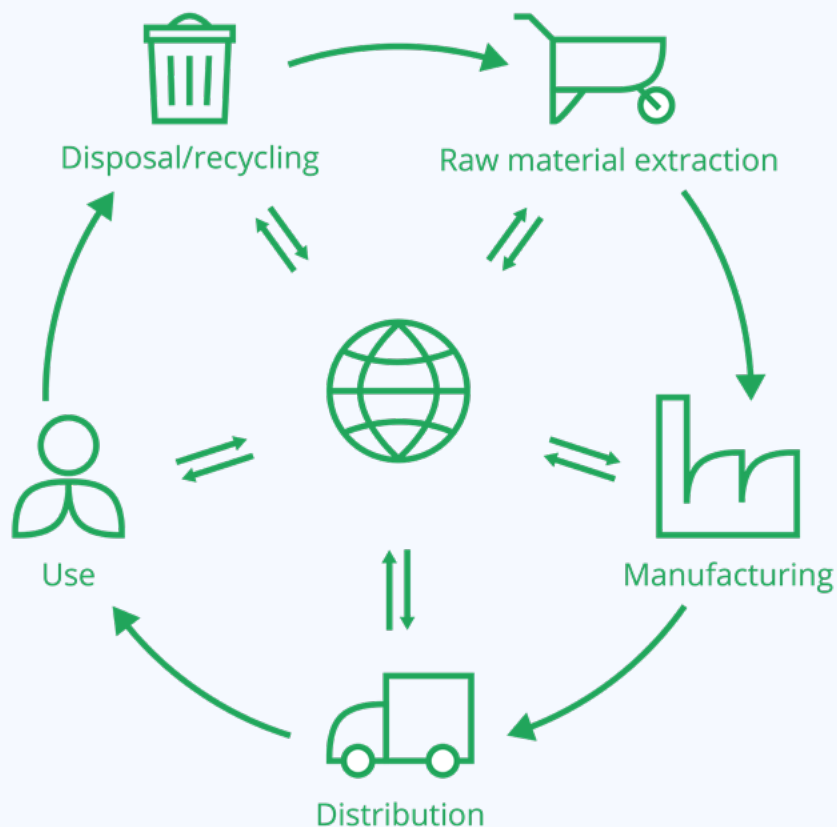
Outline your product's journey across the life cycle stages below. Use the guiding questions on the next page to help you start identifying likely environmental hotspots in your supply chain.

Disposal/ recycling

Raw materials

Use

Manufacturing



Packaging & distribution

! Guiding questions

Use the screening questions below to begin identifying likely environmental hotspots in your product or organization. Every supply chain is different, so feel free to explore beyond these prompts if other areas of impact come to mind.

Raw materials

- Do we use any materials known to have a high environmental impact?
e.g. aluminum, steel, animal products, rare earth metals
- Are any of our materials scarce, non-renewable, or difficult to recycle?
- How much of our material is from a recycled origin?
- Are hazardous substances used in our products or processes?
- Do any land-based materials come from water-scarce areas?
- Do any land-based materials rely on harmful pesticides?

Packaging & distribution

- Is packaging necessary for function, or primarily for marketing?
- Are our products transported over long distances?
- Do we rely on high-impact transport modes?
e.g. air freight

Disposal/ recycling

- What typically happens to the product at end-of-life?
e.g. landfill, incineration, recycling, reuse
- Is the product easy to repair, reuse, or recycle?
- Is our packaging material recyclable or biodegradable (and under what circumstances)?

Manufacturing

- Which parts of our process are the most energy-intensive?
- What type of energy is used throughout our value chain?
e.g. fossil fuels, grid electricity, renewables
- Are any operations outsourced, and do we know their energy profile?
- Are there processes that emit a lot of waste, heat, or emissions?
- Do we generate significant scrap or by-products during production?
- Is water used intensively in any process, and how is it treated after?

Use

- Is the product energy- or resource-intensive during its use phase?
e.g. requires lot of energy or water during use
- Are there typically product losses or waste in the use phase?

General impact awareness

- What are the biggest environmental concerns in our industry?
- Are there known regulatory or reputational risks linked to our product or sector?
- What feedback have we received from customers, suppliers, or stakeholders about sustainability?

Where do we lack data?

Map your data landscape. Use this checklist to assess where you already have data, where information is uncertain, and where clear gaps exist. This overview can help guide deeper discussions and shape your next steps.

| Raw materials | Yes | Not sure | Data gap | Comments |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Do we have data on our highest-impact suppliers or materials? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Do we have insight on the environmental certification status of materials? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Do we have supplier-specific environmental data? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Manufacturing | | | | |
| Do we have data on waste, heat, or emissions emitted during processes? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Do product teams have access to environmental insights? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Packaging & distribution | | | | |
| Do we have data on packaging materials, formats, and recyclability? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Do we have logistics data (e.g. routes, modes, distances, emissions) available? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Use | | | | |
| Do we have data on energy, water, or other impacts associated with product use? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Do we collect data on how customers use our products? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Disposal/ recycling | | | | |
| Do we track product and packaging end-of-life scenarios (e.g. recycling rates, landfill)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Do we collect reuse, repair, or take-back data from pilots or programs? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

What if we...?

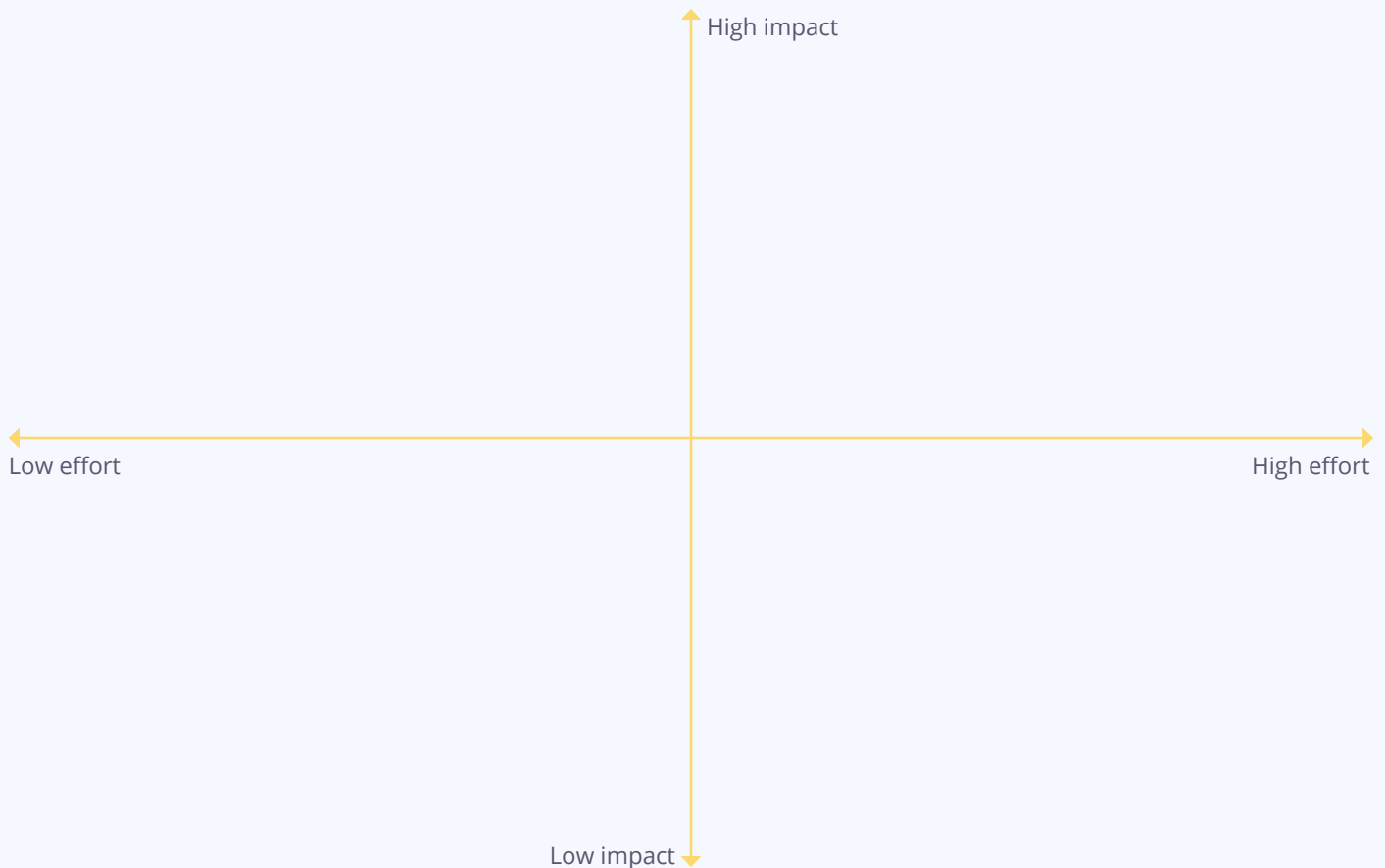
Use rough estimates, supplier insights, or simple comparisons to explore a few “what if” scenarios below, including your own questions. Remember, the goal is to start thinking critically about impact, not to finalize direction.

What if we:

- Made environmental performance a key criterion in supplier selection and contracts?
- Requested emissions data from key suppliers?
- Adjusted product composition to use lower-impact materials?
- Designed for longer product lifespan or easier repair?
- Optimized packaging for circularity?
- Invested in energy efficiency at key production sites?
- Eliminated air freight?

- ---
- ---
- ---

Now map these on the prioritization matrix below:



From actions to next steps

Based on your early exploration, choose the areas that look promising or high-risk. This isn't about making the change yet - it's about deciding where to focus next so you can gather better data, do deeper analysis, and build a stronger case for action. Use this section to document and align on your initial direction:

Actions or investments to explore next:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Key internal and external stakeholders:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Dependencies, data needs, or open questions:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

This guide is just a starting point. PRé Sustainability can support you with delivering the metrics you need to inform strategy, meet reporting and regulatory goals, and build toward environmental footprinting at scale.

[Contact us](#)