

ME-420

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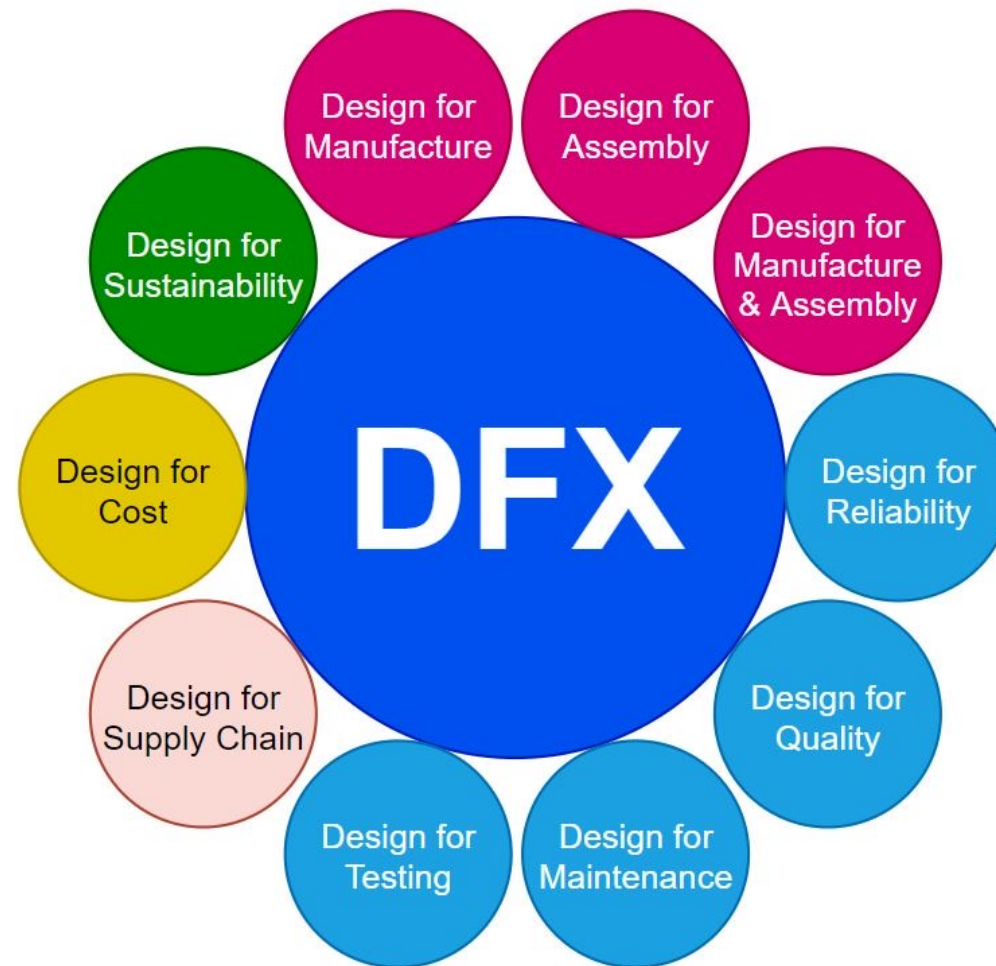
Reconfigurable Robotics Laboratory

EPFL, Switzerland



ME-420 Advanced Design for Sustainable Future





Definition of Sustainability

- Meeting current societal, environmental, humanity, and governmental needs without harming future generations.

Why Sustainability Matters in Technology?

- **Global Context:** Technology manufacturing contributes to significant environmental impacts through resource consumption, waste generation, and energy use.
- **The Need for Sustainability:** The shift toward sustainable production is driven by global environmental concerns, consumer demands, and regulatory pressures.
- **6 Rs Framework:** A roadmap to sustainability focusing on Refuse, Reduce, Rethink, Reuse, Repair, and Recycle. These strategies help us to align “success” with environmental responsibility

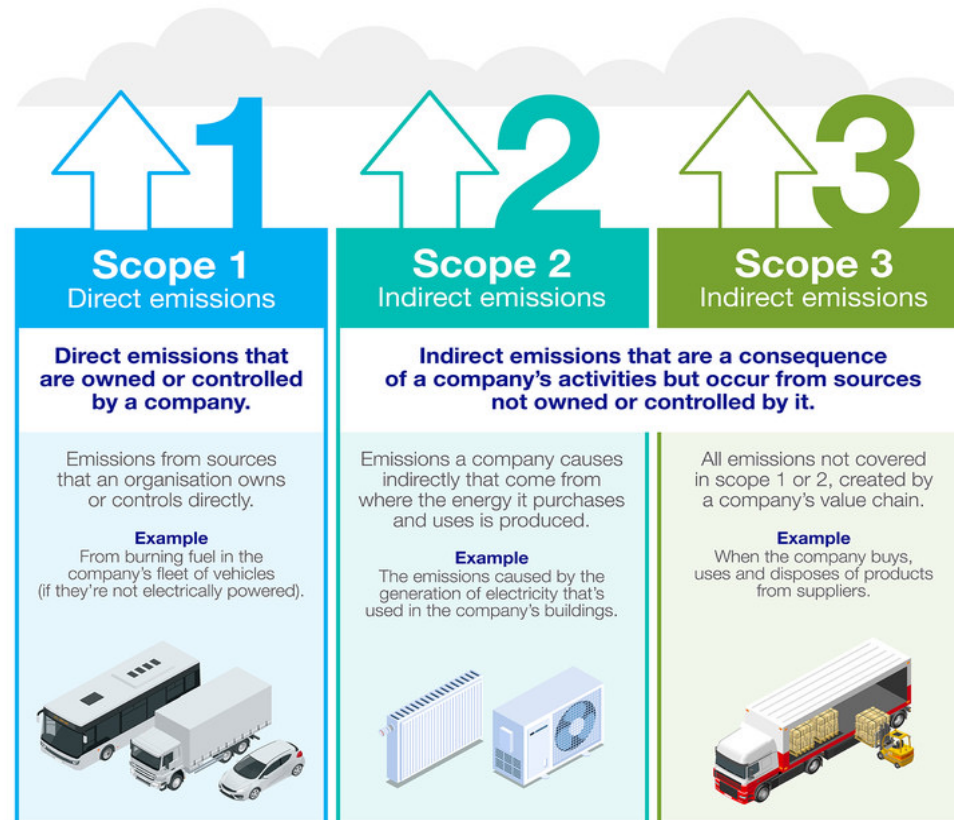
The Importance of Sustainability in Mechanical Design

- Environmental Responsibility: Engineers play a crucial role in reducing environmental impacts by designing resource-efficient products
- Quantifiable Metrics: Tracking metrics such as material usage, energy consumption, and component lifespan is essential for sustainable design.
- Focus on the 6 Rs: Refuse, Reduce, Rethink, Reuse, Repair, and Recycle — a comprehensive framework that mechanical designers can adopt, supported by measurable data to gauge impact.



What are Scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions?

The three scopes are a way of categorising the different types of greenhouse gas emissions created by a company, its suppliers and its customers.



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Rethink: Design with the End in Mind

- Key Consideration: Rethink how products are designed to reduce environmental impacts over their lifecycle while integrating quantifiable metrics.
- Designer Focus:
 - Optimize the number of components to reduce complexity and improve repairability.
 - Track energy consumption during manufacturing to identify areas for improvement.
 - Plan for product end-of-life with trackable disassembly time and material lifecycle impacts.
- Example: In mechanical design, modularity and fewer components can simplify maintenance tracking and improve sustainability through data-based optimization (e.g., reducing assembly time by 15%).

EPFL **Refuse: Eliminate Unsustainable Components**



- Design Principle: Avoid harmful materials and prioritize those with known environmental impacts and traceable lifecycle metrics.
- Considerations for you:
 - Choose based components that demonstrate functionality, durability and performance efficiency to ensure longer product life / various usages
 - Track the reduction in components across multiple product designs.

*Example: Track the percentage reduction of the number of mechanical components to demonstrate improved sustainability, e.g., reducing total number and weight of components by 30% across projects.

Reduce: Minimize Material and Energy Usage

- Focus Area: Reduce environmental footprint by minimizing material usage, energy consumption, and waste, with quantifiable goals.
- Strategies for Designers:
 - Track and reduce the number of parts used in assemblies.
 - Measure and optimize energy consumption during the product's operation, aiming for a specific reduction percentage.
 - Track reductions in material usage/wastage during manufacturing
- Example: Optimize material usage, showing quantifiable improvements, such as a 20% reduction in material use compared to previous designs

EPFL Reuse: Design for Reusability and Remanufacturing



- Objective: Ensure products and components can be reused with trackable metrics on component longevity and reusability.
- Design parts with standardized dimensions to track and extend their number of reuse cycles.
 - Measure and improve time between refurbishments to ensure durability.
 - Use data to track the reduction in new raw materials through part reuse.
 - Count how many parts are using mass produced components / replaceable components.

Repair: Prioritize Repairability in Design

- Design Focus: Enable products to be easily repaired with trackable repair metrics.
- Key Considerations:
 - Track the average repair time for key components and optimize designs to reduce it.
 - Use predictive maintenance data to track the maintenance period of parts, designing products to extend this interval.
 - Provide list of accessible parts to ensure repairability is quantifiable and easy to manage.
- Example: By designing a product with a modular architecture, track and reduce repair time by 20%, thus extending product lifespan and minimizing waste

Recycle: Design for End-of-Life Processing

- End-of-Life Planning: Design products that are easy to process at the end of their life, with trackable metrics.
- Design Strategies:
 - Use components that can be easily disassembled and repurposed.
 - Track the disassembly time and ease of processing for each component, aiming for quantifiable improvements.
 - Track the percentage of components that can be repurposed or reused from each product to the next.
- Example: Track the lifecycle of components used in the product, with a focus on extending component life or reassigning parts to new applications.
- Quantifying easy assembly: count not in arbitrary seconds, but in operation steps, number of movements, points of operations, etc

Measurable metrics in sustainable engineering design

- Energy Efficiency:
 - Energy Intensity: Mechanical designs can improve the energy efficiency of machines and systems (e.g., more efficient motors, optimized mechanical layouts).
 - Energy Return on Investment (EROI): By designing energy-efficient systems (e.g., heat recovery systems, advanced thermodynamic cycles), we can increase the energy return from processes

Water Usage and Conservation:

- Water Intensity: Mechanical engineering can optimize water usage in processes (e.g., water-efficient cooling systems or machinery that requires less water for operation).
- Water Reuse Ratio: Mechanical systems (e.g., water recycling systems or closed-loop cooling) can be designed to increase the reuse of water within a process.

Material Efficiency

- **Material Intensity:** Mechanical design can reduce material use through lightweighting (e.g., using advanced materials or optimized structures) while maintaining performance.
- **Recycling Rate:** Mechanical engineers can design products for easier disassembly, repair, and recycling, improving the overall recyclability of materials.
- **Waste Generation:** Through precise manufacturing techniques (e.g., additive manufacturing, CNC machining), mechanical design can minimize material waste in production.

Pollutant Emissions

- Toxic Emissions: Mechanical designs that incorporate cleaner combustion systems or filtration technologies can reduce the release of harmful pollutants (e.g., NO_x, particulate matter).
- Noise Pollution: Mechanical systems can be designed to minimize noise emissions by using damping materials or optimizing vibrations in mechanical components.

Lifecycle Impact

- Embodied Energy: Mechanical engineers can design products with lower embodied energy by selecting energy-efficient manufacturing methods and materials.
- Lifecycle Assessment (LCA): Design choices such as durability, ease of repair, and modularity can reduce the environmental impact across a product's lifecycle. (but for ME 420, we will focus on the scope 2)

Ecological Impact:

- Land Use Efficiency: Mechanical engineers can design compact machinery or systems that require less physical space for operation, reducing the impact on land use.

Human and Social Metrics

- Human Health Impact: Mechanical engineers can design safer systems and machinery (e.g., ergonomic tools, improved safety features) that reduce the risk of injury and health issues.
- Fair Labor Practices: Design automation and optimization can reduce dangerous labor tasks and improve worker safety, impacting the overall quality of working conditions.

Conclusion: Sustainable Design as a Competitive Advantage

- Key Takeaway: The 6 Rs framework provides mechanical engineers with the opportunity to design more sustainable products while tracking and optimizing quantifiable aspects like material use, energy consumption, and repairability.
- By integrating sustainability and measurable metrics into the design process, engineers not only meet environmental goals but also improve product efficiency and longevity.
- Action Plans for ME 420 : Start implementing the 6 Rs and track key performance indicators like energy consumption, component count, and maintenance periods, easy of assembly, etc — to prove sustainability is a measurable and achievable goal.

TPs and Demos

- Equip you with the latest sensor and actuator options in theory and practical use
- “Softness” may not necessarily be the main solution for the project but useful tools and knowledge.

Arduino and electronics

- Simple electronics to build your own motor circuit
- Use Arduino kit to program your sensor and actuator feedback loop for controlling your wearable
- You will be given a complete kit before the lecture and TP

Brainstorming

- Brainstorm 3 potential “sustainable” product idea → using materials around you such as straps, fasteners, micro actuators, pumps, are also viable options.
- Prepare a 3 slides for 3 ideas that describes
 - The need
 - Existing concurrent products / patents (Pros and Cons) that are less / unsustainable
 - Functionality – how does it move/ function ? Based on which information?

Upload by the end of the week

- Make a group of 5-6 (put group member names and number on the moodle)
- Brainstorm 3 examples of sustainable technology and make 3 slides
- Upload the slides with your group number

NEXT WEEK: Homework: TinkerCAD

Create account in tinkerCAD and learning its basics

- Creating account:
 - Youtube tutorial
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4L8ViGqaZbE>
 - TinkerCad website
 - <https://www.tinkercad.com/>
- Basics of tinkercad:
 - How to make a basic LED circuit in Tinkercad Circuits
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrOM2GABK1g>
 - Controlling LED brightness using a potentiometer in Tinkercad Circuits
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7HpLRWm81Q>

