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## **SIGNATURE portfolio**

# Extension: Analysis of combibloc **ECOPLUS** & **SIGNATURE 100** and **SIGNATURE FULL BARRIER** for combiblocSlimline and combiblocMidi on the United Kingdom market

Comparative life cycle assessment of beverage cartons containing polymers based on the mass-balanced renewable material approach

CB-100734g

commissioned by SIG Combibloc

Heidelberg, May 2022

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# 1 Introduction

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The focus of the main report is to investigate combiblocSlimline (cb3) and combiblocMidi (cb8) cartons on the European market. In this extension, the beverage cartons listed in **Table 1-1**, which were already examined in the main report, are evaluated again with country-specific parameters for the United Kingdom (same material composition, same weight). The comparisons of the beverage cartons are structured according to the same scheme.

As the SIG packaging combifitMidi (cf8) is identical to the combiblocMidi (cb8) with regard to all packaging specifications (including secondary and tertiary packaging), the results of the combiblocMidi (cb8) 1000 mL also apply to the combifitMidi (cf8) 1000 mL.

The following abbreviations, which are included in the packaging names are applied in this study:

- combiblocSlimline (cb3)
- combiblocMidi (cb8)
- Standard RS (robust structure)
- cSwift (combiSwift)
- cMaxx (combiMaxx)
- **SIGNATURE PACK FB** (full barrier, containing aluminium)
- **SIGNATURE PACK 100** (100% mass-balanced PE, PP, PA)

**Table 1-1:** List of beverage cartons examined in the United Kingdom (1000 mL)

<b>combiblocSlimline (cb3) beverage cartons and closure</b>	<b>combiblocMidi (cb8) beverage cartons and closure</b>
cb3 standard RS (cSwift)	cb8 standard RS (cSwift)
cb3 standard RS (cMaxx)	cb8 standard RS (cMaxx)
cb3 EcoPlus (cSwift LP)	cb8 EcoPlus (cSwift LP)
cb3 <b>SIGNATURE PACK 100</b> (cSwift LP)	cb8 <b>SIGNATURE PACK 100</b> (cSwift LP)
cb3 <b>SIGNATURE PACK FB</b> (cSwift)	cb8 <b>SIGNATURE PACK FB</b> (cSwift)
cb3 <b>SIGNATURE PACK FB</b> (cMaxx)	cb8 <b>SIGNATURE PACK FB</b> (cMaxx)

This extension focusses only on one environmental impact category, ‘Climate Change’. Impacts on ‘Climate Change’ depend strongly on local settings like end-of-life processes or the local electricity mix. For other environmental impact categories, please refer to the results regarding the European market that are presented in the main report.

**The following parameters correspond to the parameters of the main report on the European market:**

- Functional unit
- System boundaries
- Data gathering and data quality
- Methodological aspects (mass-balanced renewable material approach, allocation, biogenic carbon)
- Manufacture of raw materials
- Process data for converting and filling
- Electricity mix for converting processes

**Adjusted parameters for the geographic scope of the extension are:**



- Distribution
- End-of-life
- Electricity mix for filling processes, recycling processes and credits
- Electrical and thermal efficiencies of the municipal waste incineration
- Landfill gas recovery rates

# 2 Adjusted parameters

## 2.1 Distribution

**Table 2-1** shows the applied distribution distances in this extension. The distribution distances for the United Kingdom market from filling to POS were provided by SIG Combibloc.

**Table 2-1:** Distribution distances in the United Kingdom for the examined packaging systems

 Distribution distance				
 Market	Distribution Step 1		Distribution step 2	
	Filler → distribution centre (delivery)	Distribution centre → filler (return trip)	Distribution centre → POS (delivery)	POS → distribution centre (return trip)
United Kingdom	450 km	135 km	30 km	30 km

## 2.2 End-of-life

To model the end-of-life of the examined beverage cartons one needs to know their fate after their use by the consumers. It is aimed to apply the recycling rate and disposal split for the beverage cartons of the United Kingdom market. These data has been collected from different waste management reports and statistics. For beverage cartons specific recycling rates are publicly available for the market examined.

The applied recycling rate and the disposal split for United Kingdom are listed in **Table 2-2**.

**Table 2-2:** End-of-life split of beverage cartons examined

United Kingdom		Source
Recycling rate		
Beverage cartons	confidential	(EXTR:ACT 2020)
Disposal split		
Landfill	26.8%	(Eurostat 2021) municipal waste statistic, data for 2019
Incineration	73.2%	

## 2.3 Electricity mix

Modelling of electricity generation is particularly relevant for the production of base materials as well as for filling processes, recycling processes and credits. Electric power supply is modelled using country specific grid electricity mixes, since the environmental burdens of power production varies strongly depending on the electricity generation technology. A more detailed description is given in **section 3.9.2** of the main report.

The emission factor (Climate Change) for the United Kingdom is 266 g/kWh for the electricity mix used (reference year 2018) (Fehrenbach et al. 2016; IEA 2018), while the average EU electricity mix is 416 g/kWh. This means that the United Kingdom electricity mix is responsible for around 36% lower greenhouse gas emissions than the European one.

## 2.4 Municipal waste incineration

The electrical and thermal efficiencies of the municipal solid waste incineration plants (MSWI) are shown in table **Table 2-3**.

**Table 2-3:** Electrical and thermal efficiencies of the incineration plants for the United Kingdom

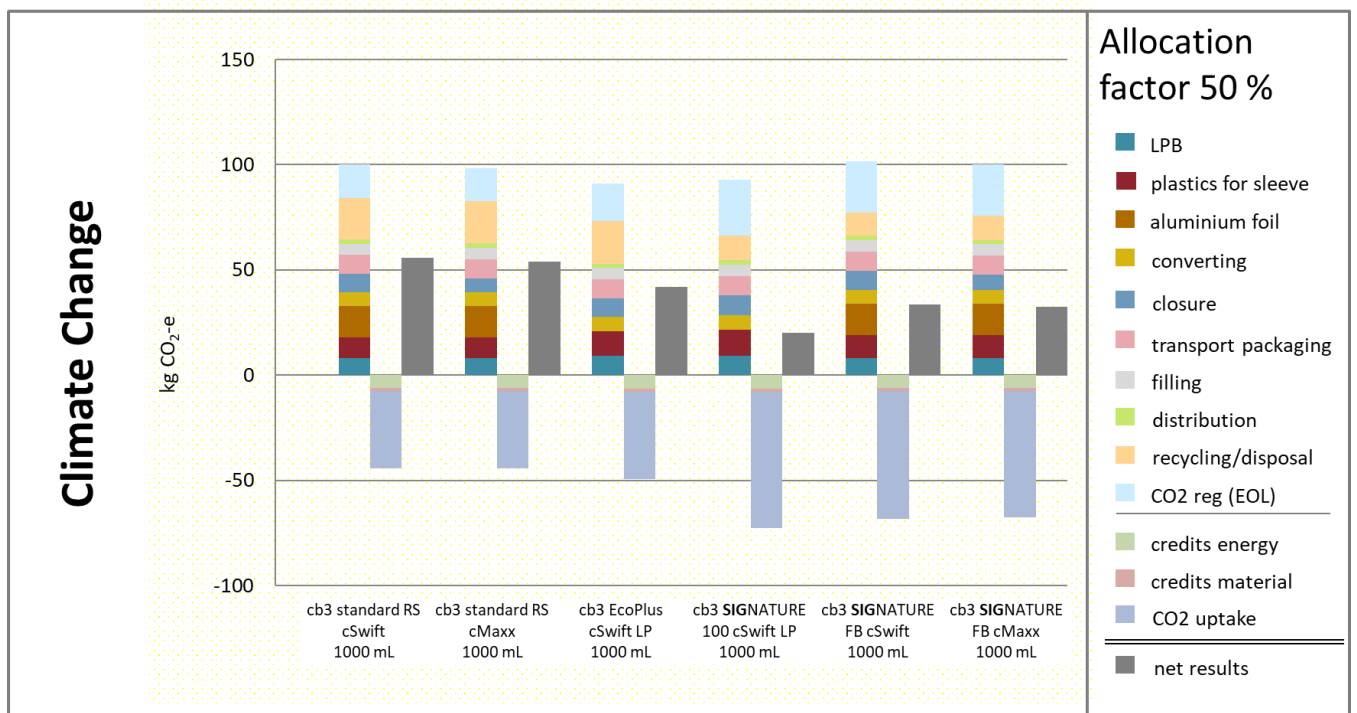
Geographic Scope	Electrical efficiency	Thermal efficiency	Reference period	Source
United Kingdom	19.7%	4.2%	2016	(Tolvik 2021)

The efficiencies are used as parameters for the incineration model, which assumes a technical standard (especially regarding flue gas cleaning) that complies with the requirements given by the EU incineration directive (EU 2018). It is assumed that the electric energy generated in MSWI plants substitutes market specific grid electricity. Furthermore, it is assumed that the thermal energy recovered in MSWI plants is used as process heat.

# 3 Results and discussion

## 3.1 United Kingdom combiblocSlimline (cb3) beverage cartons 1000 mL

### 3.1.1 Scenario I (50% allocation): numerical values and graphs

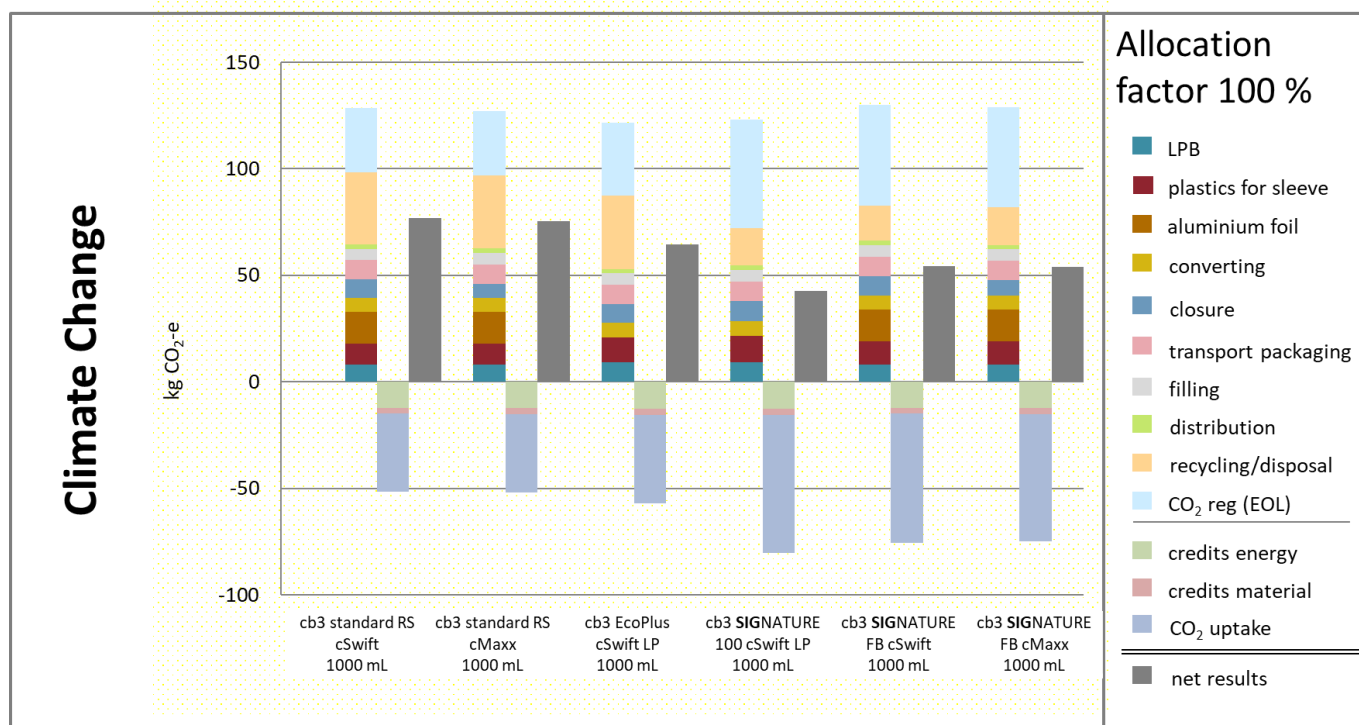


**Figure 3-1:** Climate Change results of **scenario I United Kingdom, combiblocSlimline (cb3) beverage cartons** with allocation factor 50%

**Table 3-1:** Climate Change results of **scenario I United Kingdom, combiblocSlimline (cb3) beverage cartons** with allocation factor 50%: burdens, credits and net results per functional unit of 1000 L beverage

Scenario I United Kingdom, allocation factor 50 %		cb3 standard RS cSwift TC 1000 mL	cb3 standard RS cMaxx TC 1000 mL	cb3 EcoPlus cSwift LP TC 1000 mL	cb3 SIGNATURE 100 cSwift LP TC 1000 mL	cb3 SIGNATURE FB cSwift TC 1000 mL	cb3 SIGNATURE FB cMaxx TC 1000 mL
Climate change [kg CO <sub>2</sub> -equivalents]	Burdens	84.15	82.59	73.32	66.39	77.20	75.86
	CO <sub>2</sub> (reg)	15.87	15.88	17.86	26.30	24.50	24.22
	Credits	-7.62	-7.68	-7.99	-7.99	-7.62	-7.68
	CO <sub>2</sub> uptake	-36.71	-36.72	-41.39	-64.79	-60.65	-59.84
	Net results (Σ)	55.69	54.06	41.80	19.90	33.44	32.55

**3.1.2 Scenario II (100% allocation): numerical values and graphs**



**Figure 3-2:** Climate Change results of **scenario II United Kingdom, combiblocSlimline (cb3) beverage cartons** with allocation factor 100%

**Table 3-2:** Climate Change results of **scenario II United Kingdom, combiblocSlimline (cb3) beverage cartons** with allocation factor 100%: burdens, credits and net results per functional unit of 1000 L beverage

Scenario II United Kingdom, allocation factor 100 %		cb3 standard RS cSwift TC 1000 mL	cb3 standard RS cMaxx TC 1000 mL	cb3 EcoPlus cSwift LP TC 1000 mL	cb3 SIGNATURE 100 cSwift LP TC 1000 mL	cb3 SIGNATURE FB cSwift TC 1000 mL	cb3 SIGNATURE FB cMaxx TC 1000 mL
Climate change [kg CO <sub>2</sub> -equivalents]	Burdens	98.15	96.92	87.49	72.11	82.57	81.84
	CO <sub>2</sub> (reg)	30.23	30.24	34.03	50.90	47.49	46.92
	Credits	-14.99	-15.12	-15.71	-15.71	-14.99	-15.12
	CO <sub>2</sub> uptake	-36.71	-36.72	-41.39	-64.79	-60.65	-59.84
	Net results (Σ)	76.68	75.32	64.42	42.51	54.42	53.79

### 3.1.3 Comparison between systems

The percentages in **Table 3-3** show the difference of net results between all considered formats of combiblocSlimline (cb3) beverage cartons in the same volume segment. The percentage is based on the net results of each compared packaging system. Both scenarios, scenario I (AF 50) and scenario II (AF 100), are equally used for the comparison between the systems. Differences of 10% or less are considered to be insignificant.

**Table 3-3:** Comparison of Climate Change net results of **combiblocSlimline (cb3) beverage cartons** (United Kingdom)

	The net results of									
	combibloc-Slimline (cb3) EcoPlus cSwift LP 1000 mL		combiblocSlimline (cb3) SIGNATURE 100 cSwift LP 1000 mL				combibloc-Slimline (cb3) SIGNATURE FB cSwift 1000 mL		combibloc-Slimline (cb3) SIGNATURE FB cMaxx 1000 mL	
	are lower (green)/higher (red) than those of									
	combibloc-Slimline (cb3) standard RS cSwift 1000 mL		combibloc-Slimline (cb3) standard RS cSwift 1000 mL		combibloc-Slimline (cb3) EcoPlus cSwift LP 1000 mL		combibloc-Slimline (cb3) standard RS cSwift 1000 mL		combibloc-Slimline (cb3) standard RS cMaxx 1000 mL	
	AF 50	AF 100	AF 50	AF 100	AF 50	AF 100	AF 50	AF 100	AF 50	AF 100
<b>Impact category</b>										
Climate Change	-25%	-16%	-64%	-45%	-52%	-34%	-40%	-29%	-40%	-29%

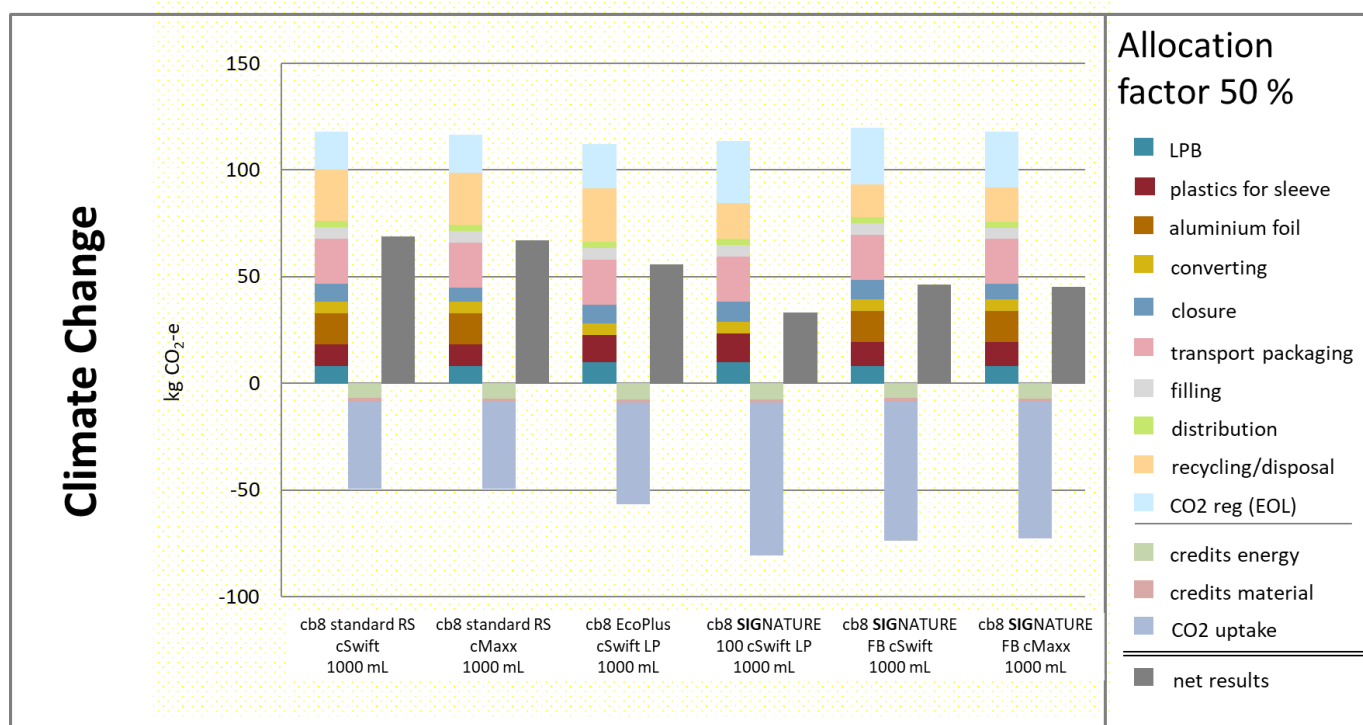
The combiblocSlimline (cb3) EcoPlus cSwift LP shows lower net results in the 'Climate Change' category than the compared combiblocSlimline (cb3) standard RS cSwift. All the **SIGNATURE** beverage cartons show lower net results in the 'Climate Change' category than the standard and EcoPlus cartons compared in both scenario variants (AF 50, AF 100).



For this category and the comparison of combiblocSlimline (cb3) packaging systems, the results for United Kingdom show a similar picture as those of the European market.

### 3.2 United Kingdom combiblocMidi (cb8) beverage cartons 1000 mL

#### 3.2.1 Scenario I (50% allocation): Numerical values and graphs

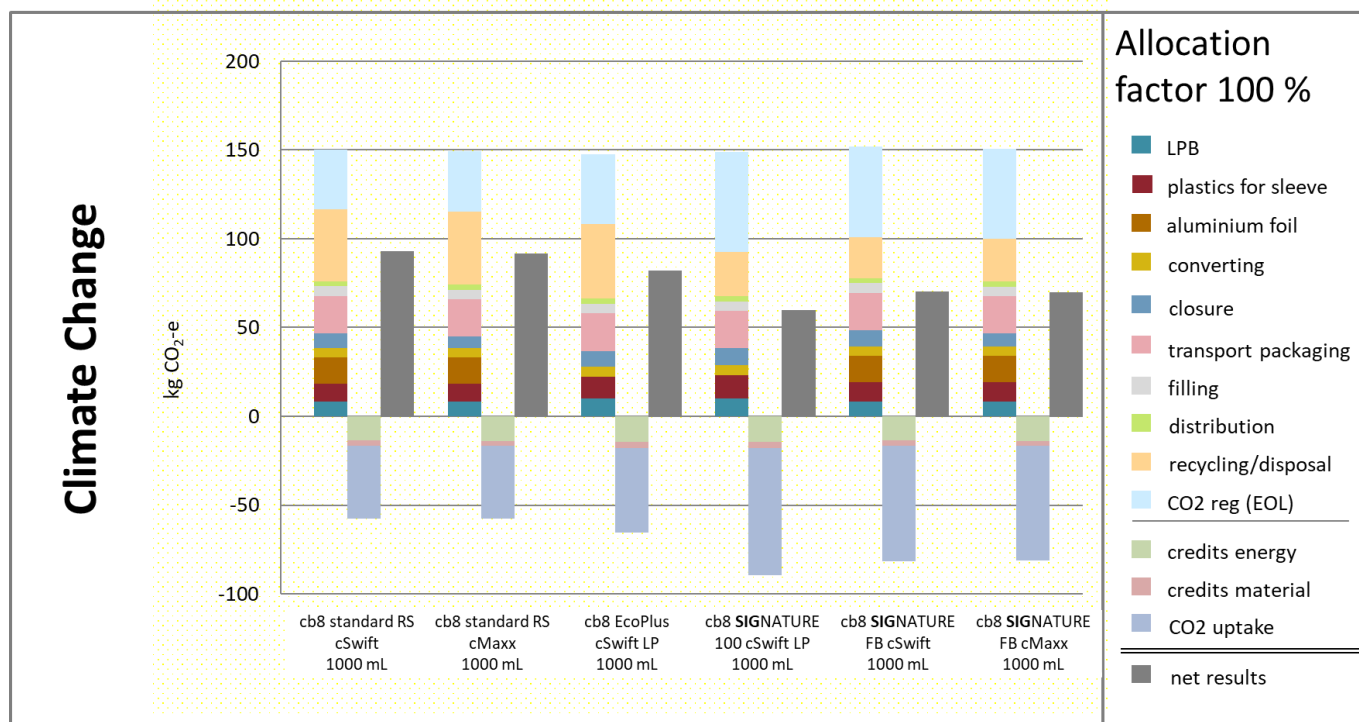


**Figure 3-3:** Climate Change results of scenario I United Kingdom, combiblocMidi (cb8) beverage cartons with allocation factor 50%

**Table 3-4:** Climate Change results of scenario I United Kingdom, combiblocMidi (cb8) beverage cartons with allocation factor 50%: burdens, credits and net results per functional unit of 1000 L beverage

Scenario I United Kingdom, allocation factor 50 %		cb8 standard RS cSwift 1000 mL	cb8 standard RS cMaxx 1000 mL	cb8 EcoPlus cSwift LP 1000 mL	cb8 SIGNATURE 100 cSwift LP 1000 mL	cb8 SIGNATURE FB cSwift 1000 mL	cb8 SIGNATURE FB cMaxx 1000 mL
Climate Change [kg CO <sub>2</sub> -equivalents]	Burdens	100.19	98.63	91.53	84.35	93.15	91.80
	CO <sub>2</sub> (reg)	17.82	17.82	20.63	29.30	26.56	26.28
	Credits	-8.49	-8.55	-9.13	-9.13	-8.49	-8.55
	CO <sub>2</sub> uptake	-40.86	-40.88	-47.48	-71.51	-65.12	-64.31
	Net results (Σ)	68.65	67.03	55.55	33.01	46.10	45.21

### 3.2.2 Scenario II (100% allocation): Numerical values and graphs



**Figure 3-4:** Climate Change results of **scenario II United Kingdom, combiblocMidi (cb8) beverage cartons** with allocation factor 100%

**Table 3-5:** Climate Change results of **scenario II United Kingdom, combiblocMidi (cb8) beverage cartons** with allocation factor 100%: burdens, credits and net results per functional unit of 1000 L beverage

Scenario II United Kingdom, allocation factor 100 %		cb8 standard RS cSwift 1000 mL	cb8 standard RS cMaxx 1000 mL	cb8 EcoPlus cSwift LP 1000 mL	cb8 SIGNATURE 100 cSwift LP 1000 mL	cb8 SIGNATURE FB cSwift 1000 mL	cb8 SIGNATURE FB cMaxx 1000 mL
Climate Change [kg CO <sub>2</sub> -equivalents]	Burdens	116.63	115.40	108.41	92.57	100.84	100.11
	CO <sub>2</sub> (reg)	33.74	33.75	39.13	56.46	51.24	50.67
	Credits	-16.67	-16.80	-17.91	-17.91	-16.67	-16.80
	CO <sub>2</sub> uptake	-40.86	-40.88	-47.48	-71.51	-65.12	-64.31
	Net results (Σ)	92.84	91.48	82.15	59.60	70.28	69.66

### 3.2.3 Comparison between systems

The percentages in **Table 3-6** show the difference of net results between all considered formats of combiblocMidi (cb8) beverage cartons in the same volume segment. The percentage is based on the net results of each compared packaging system. Both scenarios, scenario I (AF 50) and scenario II (AF 100), are equally used for the comparison between the systems. Differences of 10% or less are considered to be insignificant.

**Table 3-6:** Comparison of Climate Change net results of **combiblocMidi (cb8) beverage cartons** (United Kingdom)

	The net results of									
	combiblocMidi (cb8) EcoPlus cSwift LP 1000 mL		combiblocMidi (cb8) SIGNATURE 100 cSwift LP 1000 mL				combiblocMidi (cb8) SIGNATURE FB cSwift 1000 mL		combiblocMidi (cb8) SIGNATURE FB cMaxx 1000 mL	
	are lower (green)/higher (red) than those of									
	combiblocMidi (cb8) standard RS cSwift 1000 mL		combiblocMidi (cb8) standard RS cSwift 1000 mL		combiblocMidi (cb8) EcoPlus cSwift LP 1000 mL		combiblocMidi (cb8) standard RS cSwift 1000 mL		combiblocMidi (cb8) standard RS cMaxx 1000 mL	
	AF 50	AF 100	AF 50	AF 100	AF 50	AF 100	AF 50	AF 100	AF 50	AF 100
<b>Impact category</b>										
Climate Change	-19%	-12%	-52%	-36%	-41%	-27%	-33%	-24%	-33%	-24%

The combiblocMidi (cb8) EcoPlus cSwift LP shows lower net results in the ‘Climate Change’ category than the compared combiblocMidi (cb8) standard RS cSwift. All the **SIGNATURE** beverage cartons show lower net results in the ‘Climate Change’ category than the standard and EcoPlus cartons compared in both scenario variants (AF 50, AF 100).

For this category and the comparison of combiblocMidi (cb8) packaging systems, the results for United Kingdom show a similar picture as those of the European market.

# 4 Conclusions and Recommendations

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## Conclusions

- The combiblocSlimline (cb3) EcoPlus cSwift LP shows lower net results in the 'Climate Change' category than the compared combiblocSlimline (cb3) standard RS cSwift. All the **SIGNATURE** beverage cartons show lower net results in the 'Climate Change' category than the standard and EcoPlus cartons compared in both scenario variants (AF 50, AF 100). For this category and the comparison of combiblocSlimline (cb3) packaging systems, the results for United Kingdom show a similar picture as those of the European market.
- The combiblocMidi (cb8) EcoPlus cSwift LP shows lower net results in the 'Climate Change' category than the compared combiblocMidi (cb8) standard RS cSwift. All the **SIGNATURE** beverage cartons show lower net results in the 'Climate Change' category than the standard and EcoPlus cartons compared in both scenario variants (AF 50, AF 100). For this category and the comparison of combiblocMidi (cb8) packaging systems, the results for the United Kingdom show a similar picture as those of the European market.
- To get an indication of how the packaging systems examined in this extension study perform in other environmental impact categories like 'Ozone Depletion', 'Summer Smog', 'Particulate Matter', 'Acidification', 'Terrestrial- and Aquatic Eutrophication', 'Abiotic Resource Depletion', 'Non-renewable Primary Energy' and 'Total Primary Energy', one can also refer to the main report regarding the European market. However, some background parameters are different due to the different geographical scopes. For this reason, the results of the European scope can only serve as an indication of the full set of environmental impact categories.

## Recommendations

- Since the environmental result of the combiblocSlimline (cb3) and combiblocMidi (cb8) beverage carton format is significantly influenced by the production of its main components, the sleeve and closure, measures to ensure the same functionality by the use of less material are recommended.
- It is shown in this study that the closures play a crucial role in the life cycle of the combiblocSlimline (cb3) and combiblocMidi (cb8) beverage carton formats. To improve the overall environmental performance, it is recommended to assess the possibilities of using smaller and lighter closures for all combiblocSlimline (cb3) and combiblocMidi (cb8) beverage carton formats.
- The beverage cartons combiblocSlimline (cb3) and combiblocMidi (cb8) **SIGNATURE 100** with the closure cSwift LP (1000 mL) show the lowest environmental impacts in 'Climate Change'. Therefore, from an environmental viewpoint it is recommended to prefer the combiblocSlimline (cb3) and combiblocMidi (cb8) **SIGNATURE 100** cSwift LP (1000 mL) over the other beverage carton formats examined in this study on the UK market.
- By comparing the closure results of the examined combiblocSlimline (cb3) and combiblocMidi (cb8) **SIGNATURE FB** cSwift (1000 mL) with the combiblocSlimline (cb3) and combiblocMidi (cb8) standard RS cSwift on the UK market, it can be concluded, that the substitution of fossil polymers by mass-balanced polymers based on tall oil leads to lower net results in 'Climate Change'. The implementation of polymers based on tall oil via a mass-balance approach therefore is recommended.
- It is also recommended to actually achieve a more significant physical share of tall oil based input materials for the production of polymers, as the by-product of the pulp industry is currently only dedicated to direct thermal use. The utilisation and demand of mass-balanced polymers by SIG Combibloc might be a driver to do so.

# References

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