



2.3 Business model experimentation for circular economy: close, slow, narrow, regenerate

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Experimentation with business models is a key pathway to accelerate the circular economy transition in established organisations and in emerging startups (e.g. Jørgensen & Pedersen, 2018). Circular business model experimentation has been defined as ‘An iterative approach to develop and test circular value propositions in a real-life context with customers and stakeholders, starting with a shared goal. It involves rapid learning based on empirical data to provide evidence on the viability of circular value propositions. Iterations involve increased complexity of experiments. There is a learning focus on initiating wider transitions, such as transforming consumer behaviours for the circular economy’ (Bocken et al., 2021). Yet, how this definition is connected to circular business model strategies remains underexplored.

It is well established that taking established businesses and new ventures towards circularity requires experimentation to create desirable, feasible, viable, and sustainable circular business models (Bocken & Geradts, 2022). Some companies have been successful at creating business models focused on resource efficiencies and ‘narrowing’ (e.g. Bocken et al., 2016) or ‘intensifying’ and closing the resource loop through ‘cycling’ (e.g. Geissdoerfer et al., 2020). These circular business model strategies are implemented by experimenting with well-defined value propositions (Bashir et al., 2020).

The more challenging circular business models with businesses cases that require rethinking and disrupting the linear economy business status quo are, however, much less commonplace (Blomsma et al., 2022). These business models might focus on regeneration: of nature or society. Slowing material and value loops through the circular strategy sufficiency is another more disruptive circular strategy. Whereas businesses deem sufficiency important, the implications of redefining consumption and business models accordingly are contested and less understood by practitioners (Walker et al., 2021).

In this conference track, we welcome contributions that explore cases, practices, tools, and methods of circular business model experimentation. We especially welcome those submissions that explore the more challenging circular business model strategies such as slowing, sufficiency, or regeneration.

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