



# Implementation of Circular Economy in various departments within a company

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## Background

We live in a throwaway society where products have an increasingly short life span. These factors have led to environmental degradation causing damage to the planet so that we are in danger of leaving the safe operating space for humans to thrive in. A comprehensive approach is circular economy, which aims at keeping resources as long as possible in the production cycle. Although the interest in circular economy to facilitate change towards sustainability is rising,

there are not many companies that have implemented it into their businesses. This research explored the perspective of entrepreneurs and what challenges they perceived when implementing circular economy into their businesses. The goal was to bridge the gap between challenges discussed in literature and the real experiences and challenges faced by entrepreneurs. The literature and interviews were used to determine the challenges faced and the proposed solutions. The aim is to discover what individual challenges exist and how they are approached.

## Introduction

It is still highly disputed which strategy is the most suitable and successful in combating the negative side-effects of a growing economy. A comprehensive approach is circular economy, which aims at keeping resources as long as possible in the production cycle. The unclear definition of circular economy, the challenges created by the market such as the shortage of experts, and by policy makers lead to the research question of this paper "What are the challenges perceived by entrepreneurs when implementing Circular Economy within their companies?"

## Results

### Definition of Circular Economy

The participants were asked to present their understanding or definition of circular economy.

- two of the interviewees stated using the cradle-to-cradle approach as their preferred way of defining circular economy
- advantages perceived by all interviewees were a lower consumption of resources and waste avoidance
- The most important aspect for them was that chosen materials remain in the loop

### Internal Challenges

- there is an active communication across the departments, confirmed by all interviewees
- the importance of communication and finding a balance between the varying interests was stated
- the process of changing and implementing circular economy takes a long period of time

### External Challenges

- is no EU wide agreement on standards and strategies to follow when pursuing sustainability
- challenge to establish circular economy in a system that is organized on a linear and single use model
- Currently the infrastructure is not designed for circular economy and there are gaps in the regulations
- it can be a challenge to convince customers that their packaging is sustainable

### Responsibility for Change

- None of the interviewees determined one single group of actors that should be making these changes alone.
- distinction between who is most influential driver in theory and who they believe is the most influential driver in reality.

## Conclusions

The insights gained from the interviews show similarities to the challenges and barriers described in literature. However, they provide new and deeper insights into those challenges. Furthermore, in some aspects the results differ from the experiences described in literature. The findings imply that for the success of circular economy changes in governmental policies are necessary, especially in the infrastructure. that implementing circular economy into businesses is possible on the small scale as the examples show, and for its success changes on a macro level need to be made. Especially regarding the standardisation of requirements on a global or at least EU wide scale.

## References

Yo<https://www.government.nl/topics/circular-economy/from-a-linear-to-a-circular-economy>,

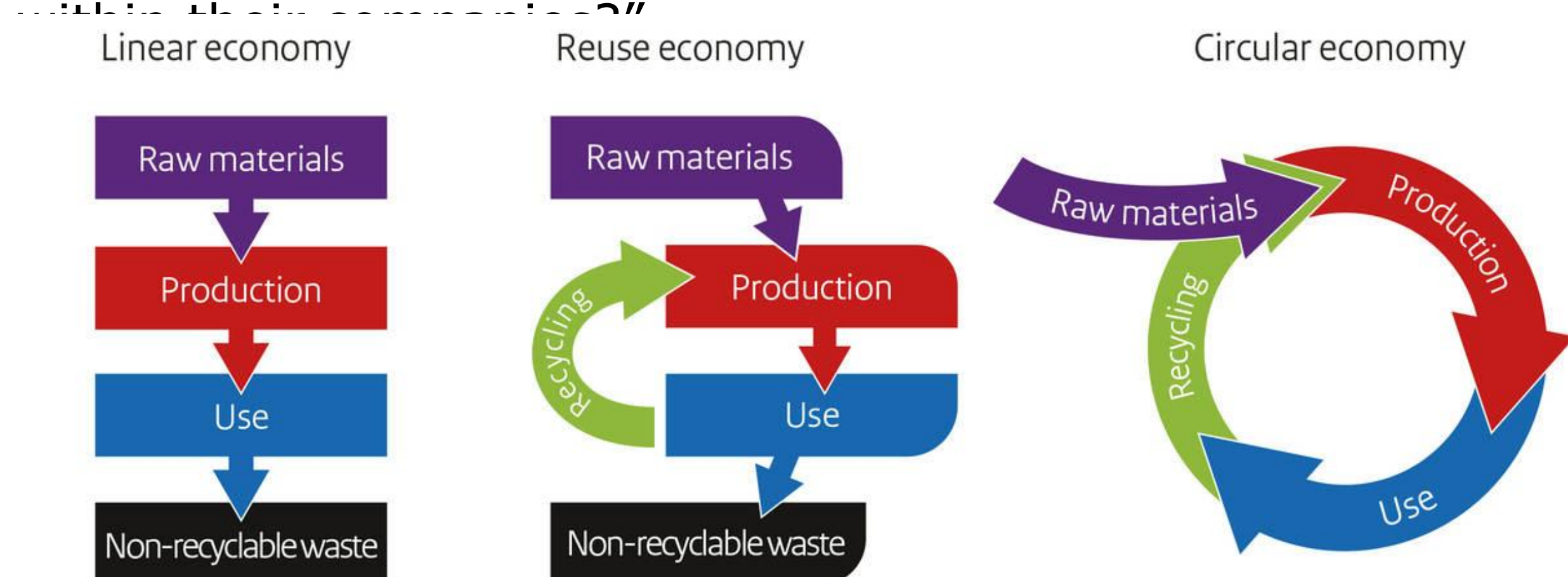


Figure 1. Linear Economy vs. Reuse Economy vs. Circular Economy

## Methods

In order to conduct this research a qualitative, interview-based approach to gather the relevant data was chosen. For this study interviews were conducted to gather the relevant data. The interviews were conducted in the form of semi-structured interviews. A case was chosen on the basis that the company had a least made one change towards implementing circular economy into their business. This was important because the company had to have experience with transitioning towards circular economy and therefore had encountered challenges