

## Going Circular

***Citation for published version (APA):***

Lit, F. C., Huijben, J. C. C. M., Cloodt, M. M. A. H., & Paredis, E. (2021). Going Circular: Novel Business Model Design for Start-ups in the Dutch Plastics Economy. In F. Halila, & M. Hoveskog (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on New Business Models: New Business Models in a Decade of Action: Sustainable, Evidence-based, Impactful* (pp. 374-375). Halmstad University Press.  
<https://www.newbusinessmodels.org/s/Full-Conference-Proceedings-FINAL-cite-as.pdf>

***Document status and date:***

Published: 09/06/2021

***Document Version:***

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of Record (includes final page, issue and volume numbers)

***Please check the document version of this publication:***

- A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
- The final author version and the galley proof are versions of the publication after peer review.
- The final published version features the final layout of the paper including the volume, issue and page numbers.

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# Going Circular: Novel Business Model Design for Start-ups in the Dutch Plastics Economy

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## Abstract

Plastics are an integral material to the European economy, but they remain embedded in a system that produces waste by design. The circular plastics economy has been envisioned as an alternative that will preserve the value of plastics while also reducing their negative impacts. In the transition towards such a system, the development of innovative circular business models (CBMs) plays a vital role.

CBMs in the circular plastics economy remain highly centered around recycling, a widespread strategy that does not require a shift in the core business model. While undoubtedly beneficial, incremental progress is not enough to enact a circular transition. Thus, this paper explores the business models of circular start-ups (CSUs) as they are expected to adopt more disruptive CBM approaches that might accelerate the circular plastics transition. The method combines a literature review and multiple case study. Research-based CBM design principles are derived from a systematic review of the literature on CBMs and their barriers/drivers. These are then validated through semi-structured interviews of Dutch start-ups in the circular plastics economy, while simultaneously revealing new insights from practice. The synthesis of both academic and practitioner knowledge results in robust recommendations for future entrepreneurs in designing circularity into their business models.

Upon completion, the study will have mapped CBMs in the Dutch circular plastics economy, created a deeper understanding of barriers and drivers influencing CBM in this context, and distilled a set of recommendations for entities in the plastics economy aiming to design new circular business models.



## Keywords

Circular plastics, circular business models, circular start-ups, barriers and drivers, business model design