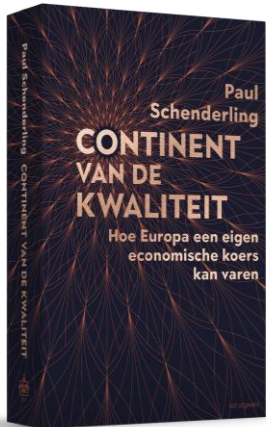


Sufficiency is the new efficiency: towards more effective circular strategies

by Paul Schenderling

June 8th, 2026





new book

podcast about the new economy



Paul Schenderling



sufficiency

research and advice on the new economy

**political
economist**

contents

this presentation offers you insights:

- why current circular policies are often ineffective at a macro level
- what the circular rebound effect is and what it means for circular strategies
- how postgrowth strategies can make circular policies much more effective
- what these new strategies mean in terms of business models





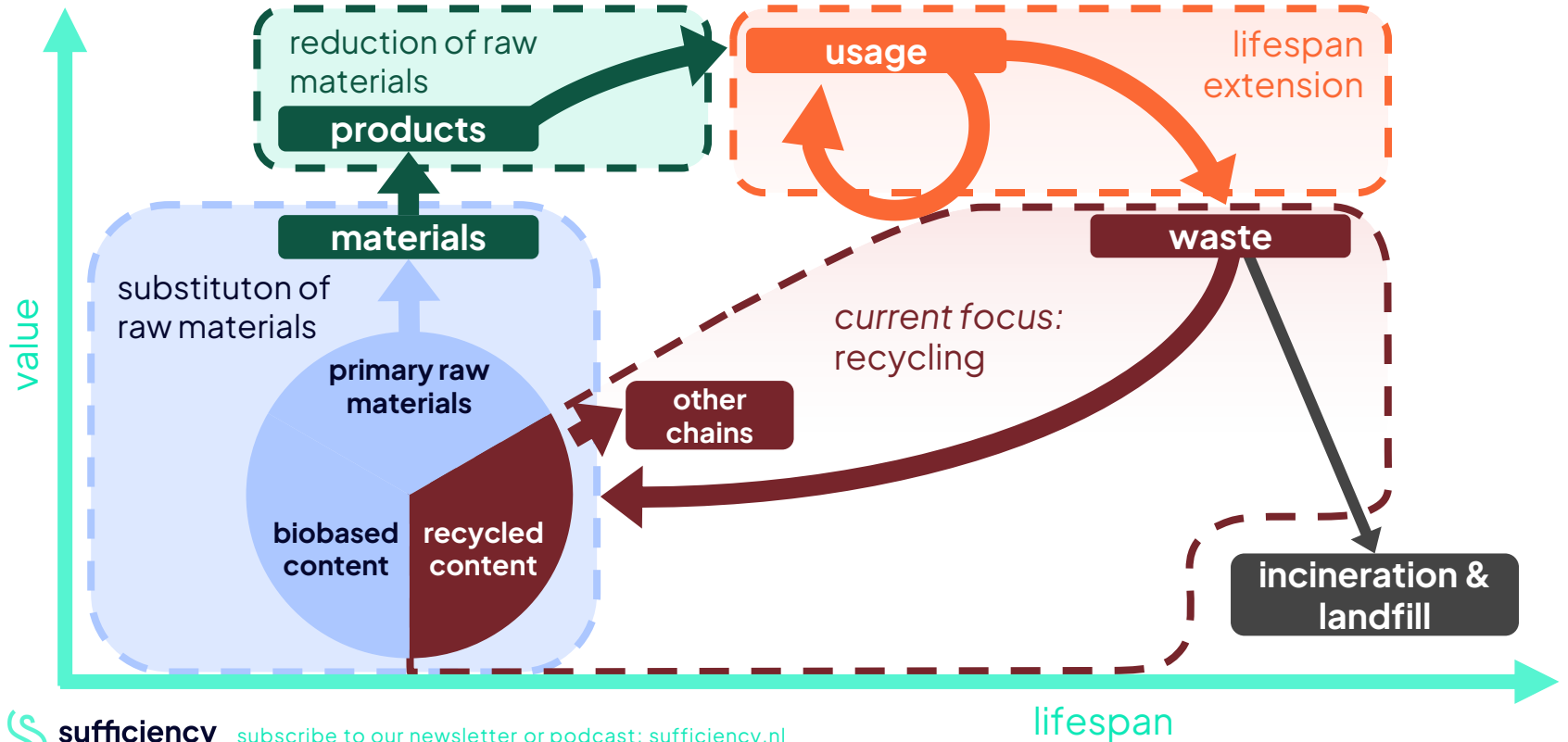
1

What challenges
do we face?

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what challenges do we face?

circular strategies



source: Marc Pruijn

Jevons paradox is breakthrough killer

production side:

- ↗ growth incentive
- ↗ less resources per product
- ↗ financial savings

consumption side:

- ↗ consumption incentive
- ↗ waste remains the cheapest
- ↗ more resources for consumption

30-100% (avg. 55%) of
environmental gains is lost

the Jevons paradox in practice



Volkswagen Beetle 1950
4 meters long
748 kilos
7.5 litres per 100 km



Volkswagen Golf 1995
4.2 meters long
1,156 kilos
7.5 litres per 100 km



Volkswagen Tiguan 2022
4.5 meters long
1,590 kilos
7.5 litres per 100 km

conclusion: more efficient consumption is 100% used for larger cars (more car)

the abc of limits to growth

a these are the 9 ecosystems that enable life on Earth:

- ↗ stratosphere
- ↗ atmosphere
- ↗ climate
- ↗ biodiversity
- ↗ land use
- ↗ soil quality
- ↗ breakdown of toxins
- ↗ acidity oceans
- ↗ freshwater cycle

b Netherlands contribute disproportionately to the 5 main causes of overshoot:

- ↗ greenhouse gas emissions
- ↗ land use
- ↗ material use
- ↗ water use
- ↗ emissions of toxins (chemicals & plastics)

all overshoot factors should go down quickly, but:

c there is no scientific evidence that all causes can be simultaneously reduced – above all: fast enough – in combination with growth

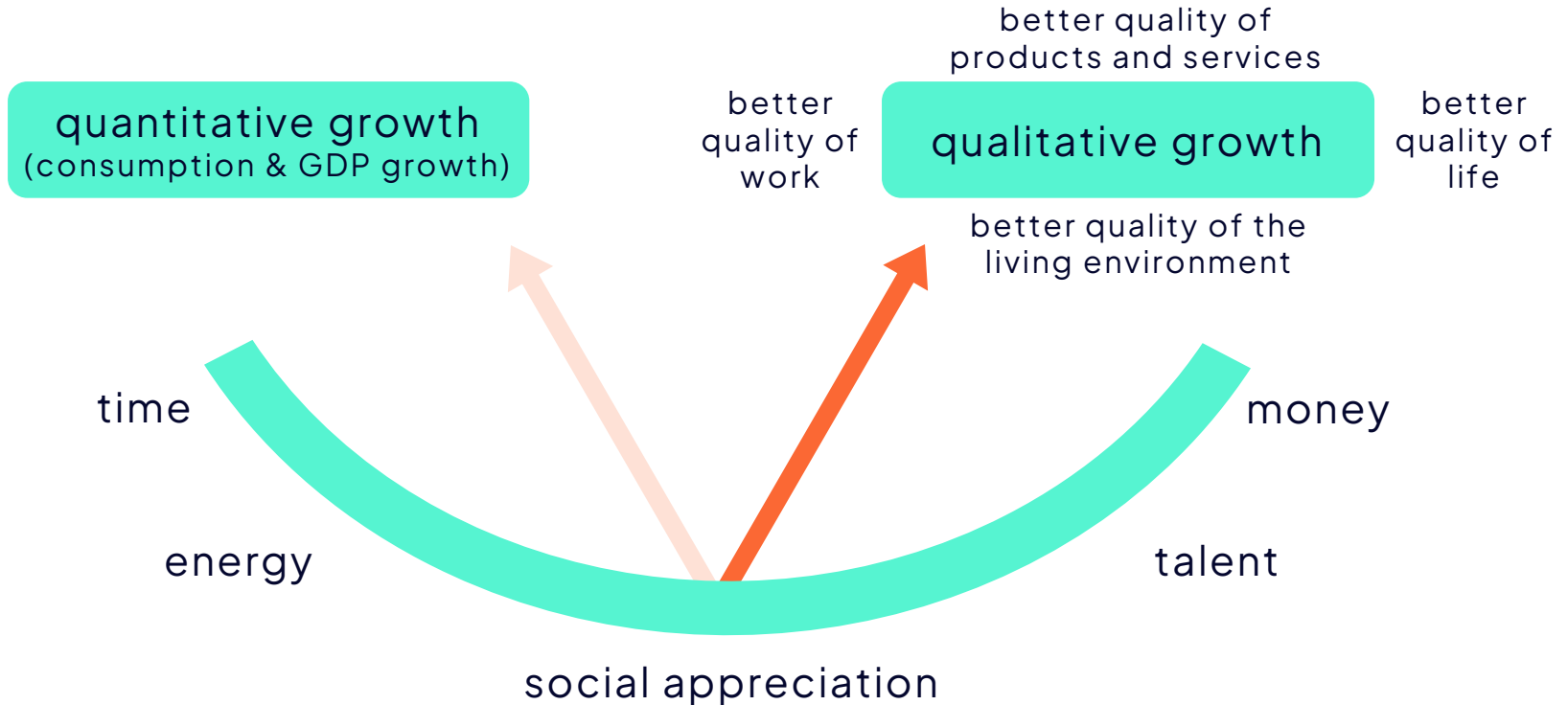
An aerial photograph of a coastal area, possibly a wetland or a small island, with a large white number '2.' overlaid on the left side. The background is a dark blue gradient with large, stylized, light blue wave-like patterns.

2.

**Solution:
postgrowth
strategies**



needed: a radical choice for quality





what policy is needed for this?

- European level: an ecological ceiling for the Big Five environmental pressures
 - example: Montreal Protocol 1987
 - future example: material quotas make all circular strategies profitable
- quotas usher in a post-growth era, because: 75% of economic activities are "highly dependent" on one or more ecosystems
- policy examples at the national level:
 - dynamo on the old economy to boost the new economy
 - combined with a quality dividend



sufficiency is the new efficiency

sufficiency: reciprocity in all steps of the value chain

- net absorption of greenhouse gases
- circular use of materials
- circular water use
- net positive contribution to biodiversity
- no emissions of toxic substances
- good work for all people in the chain

commercially viable?
sufficiency paradox

‘visionary companies’

‘corporate knights’

**key: thriving, learning
ecosystems**

‘hidden champions’

‘great places to work’



3.

Application:
postgrowth
business models

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setting new goals

- volume growth is *not* an end in itself
- focus on qualitative goals, which leads to more impact and innovation:
 - *social foundation (decent work)*:
 - living wages
 - securities of good work
 - *ecological ceiling*: budgets for raw materials, greenhouse gases, water, land and toxic substances
- benchmark for companies:



examples:



postgrowth circular strategies

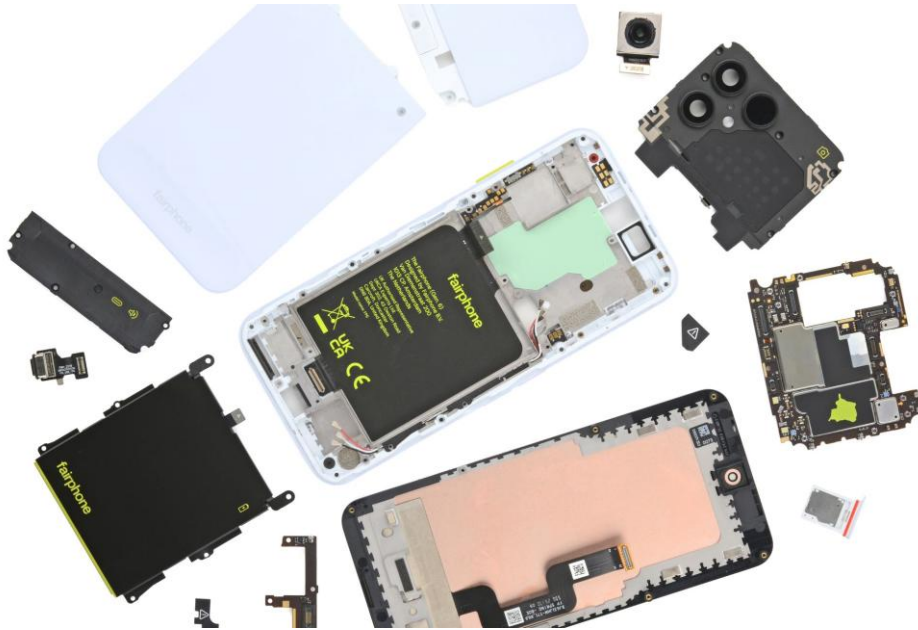
1. use less or intensify usage

- a) ask: is it needed for the result?
is it possible to buy smaller units?
- b) prevent waste
- c) reduce overcapacity, for
example buildings, machinery,
infrastructure and appliances
- d) share: it is possible to use the
same goods more intensively, by
sharing them with colleagues or
other organizations?

2. extend product lifespan

- a) long lifespan is the second-
best way to reduce overall
environmental impact
- b) design is crucial:
 - wear-resistant
components
 - modular/repairable design
- c) furthermore, maintenance and
repair are important

the power of a new business model



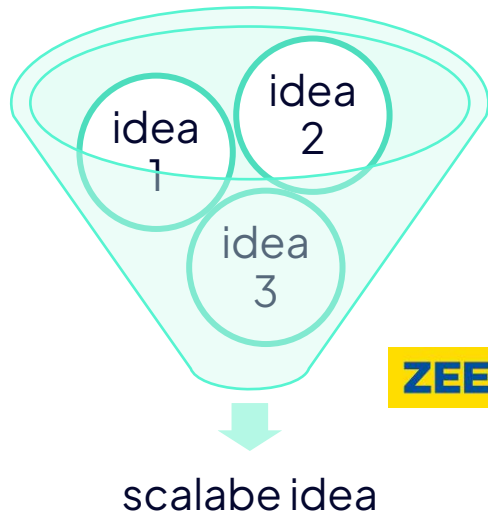
example: Fairphone 6

- more turnover per unit of product
- distinctive position in the market
- quality sells itself, less advertising is needed
- more service and cross-selling:
 - maintenance
 - personalisation
 - repair
 - customisation & upgrading
- demonstrably higher customer loyalty and attractiveness as an employer

changing the business model

reinvesting existing business profits → into future business

a. incubator:

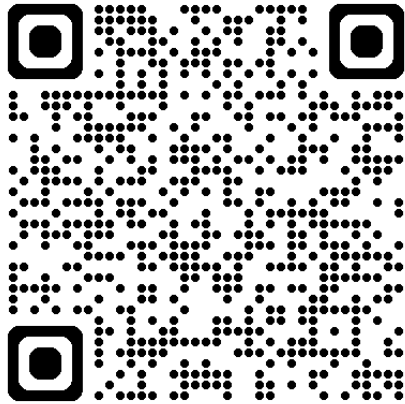


b. accelerator:



join the Club van Postgroei!

the network for and by professionals who together shape the new economy: from the national government to municipalities, and from corporates to SMEs



what we do:

- knowledge: how do you apply new economic thinking in organisations?
- know-how: how do you take others along in change?
- club: inspiring encounters with other enthusiastic professionals



the long-awaited sequel
to our bestseller
There is life after growth



a new economic vision
for Europe

more than an analysis:
a hopeful and realistic
action plan

+ five chapters with
practical tools for
companies

an English translation will be available soon



Wij zijn Sufficiency: centrum voor onderzoek en advies over brede welvaart en de nieuwe economie. Wij werken samen met relaties en opdrachtgevers aan een gelukkiger Nederland dat binnen de draagkracht van mens en aarde leeft. We werken evidence-based, kijken vanuit meerdere invalshoeken en opereren onafhankelijk.

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