



Circular Economy Introduction

What is a Circular Economy?

The predominant economic model operates in a linear fashion with inputs turning into outputs all the way until a final product and its component materials are used and then no longer needed, mostly discarded in landfills. Energy and resources are used along the way, creating by-products (mostly discarded in landfills) at each stage that increase GHG emissions and waste. This model does not support the urgent need to stay below the 2-degree Celsius global temperature increase and reduce GHG emissions by 39% and material waste by 28% by 2032 ([source](#)). As well, products and materials ending up in landfills dishonours its long-term value by creating barriers for those materials to ever be used again. On a planet with finite resources and a global society that is significantly overconsuming, we are burying important and valuable resources.

Waste is a human invention. Nature on its own doesn't create waste. A sustainable society produces and consumes in a way that works within natural cycles. How might we relearn and rethink how the products and materials that we interact with can circulate within natural cycles?

A circular economy 'closes the loop' on material use to optimize its value over time, making the concept of a landfill become obsolete. It not only reduces the number of virgin resources needed for our products and services but can also keep the material in the economy for longer and create net-new economic opportunities. For example, if a snowblower that stops working could be repaired, materials will last longer, and an income could be earned by the trained repairer. Or a snowblower sharing platform could be created where one can be rented from a local retailer or neighbour creating new revenue models.

The concept of circular economy can help us rethink and relearn how we purchase, design, deliver, use, and reuse goods and services.



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