

Press release

International Circular Challenge

At September 11th and 12th, students from [Sweden](#), [Germany](#) and [The Netherlands](#) collaborated in international virtual teams to develop new ideas to improve the circular business models of three companies. During the first day, these companies ([ECOR](#), [CEWE](#) and [DSM Niaga](#)) presented their cases. During the second day, the teams developed new innovative & feasible ideas and presented these to an expert jury.

Every team consisted of members from a different academic and national background, making it an interdisciplinary team: they benefited from each other's different strengths, background, knowledge and skills. The international student teams could make use of technical experts of the companies and process coaches. Ultimately, the companies commented on the proposals, and the expert jury selected the winning team.



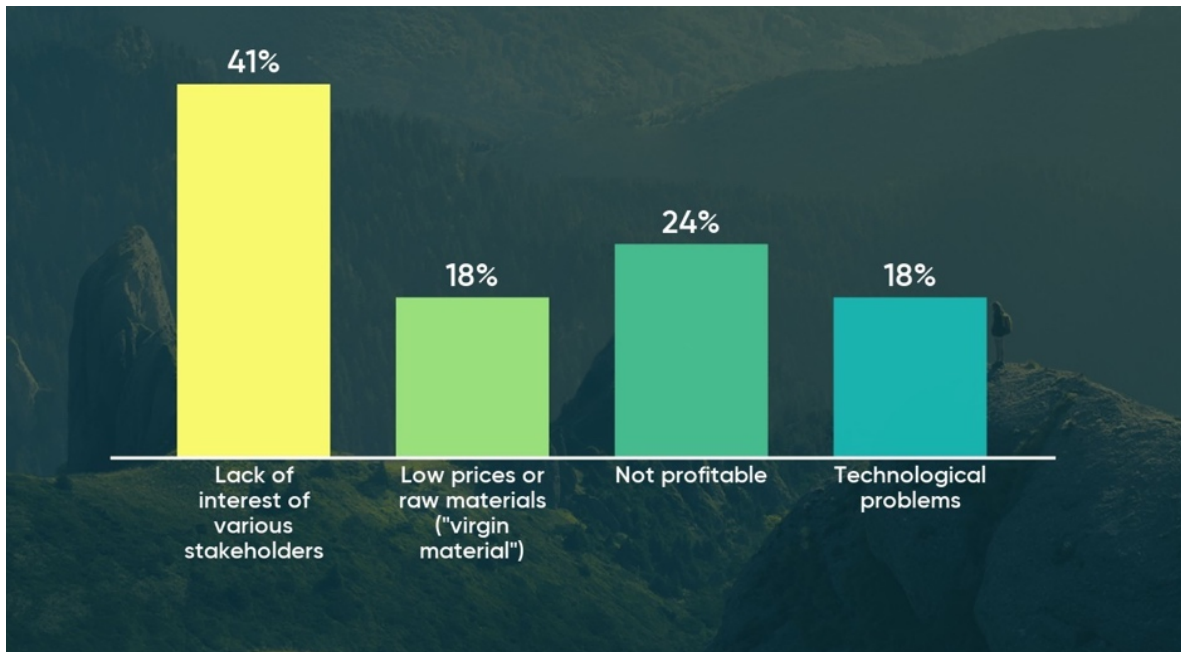
The participants made an inventory of the most important barriers of circular business:



... and of the main drivers of circular business...



They prioritized the main barriers of circular business:



The companies discussed these main barriers and drivers during their case presentations:

The presentation slide titled "FROM WASTE TO VALUE" illustrates a circular business model for cocoa. It shows the progression from a whole cocoa pod to a cocoa bean, then to a jar of cocoa beans, cocoa powder, and finally a cocoa-based product. The Zoom meeting interface on the right shows six participants: Frans Stel, Rogier de Jong, Giulia Viero, Ricardo Weigend, and Anne Seela.

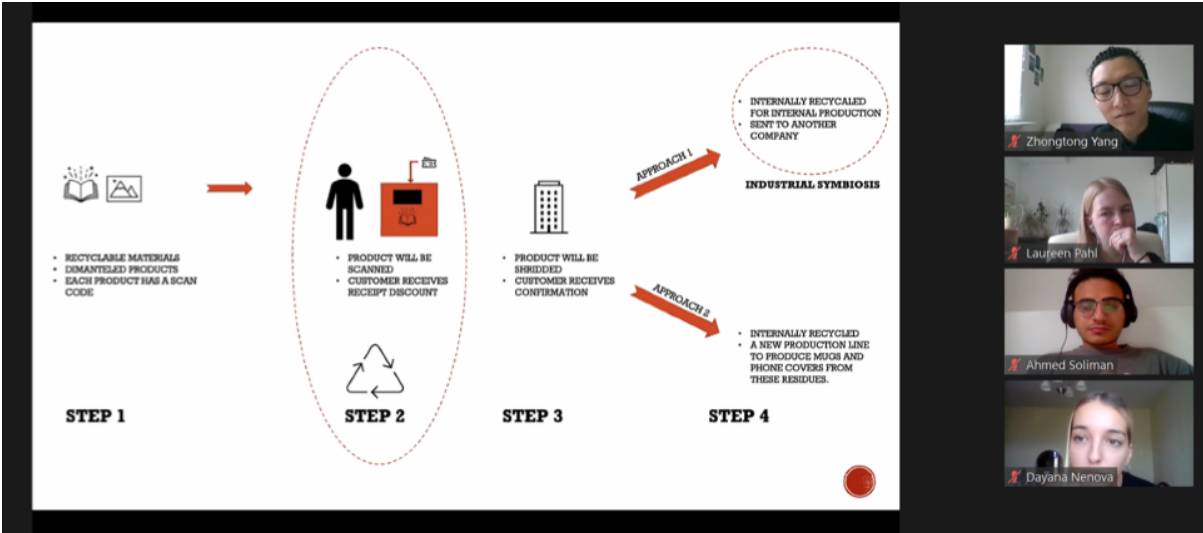
Circular business models start at the design phase. According to the participants, the main principles of circular design are:



The participants developed their solutions, using the following UNIDO model of circular business:



In joint presentations, the teams pitched their circular ideas:



OUTSOURCING WASTE

WHY DEAL WITH IT ALONE?
+ CHANGING TO LOCAL AND CIRCULAR SUPPLIERS

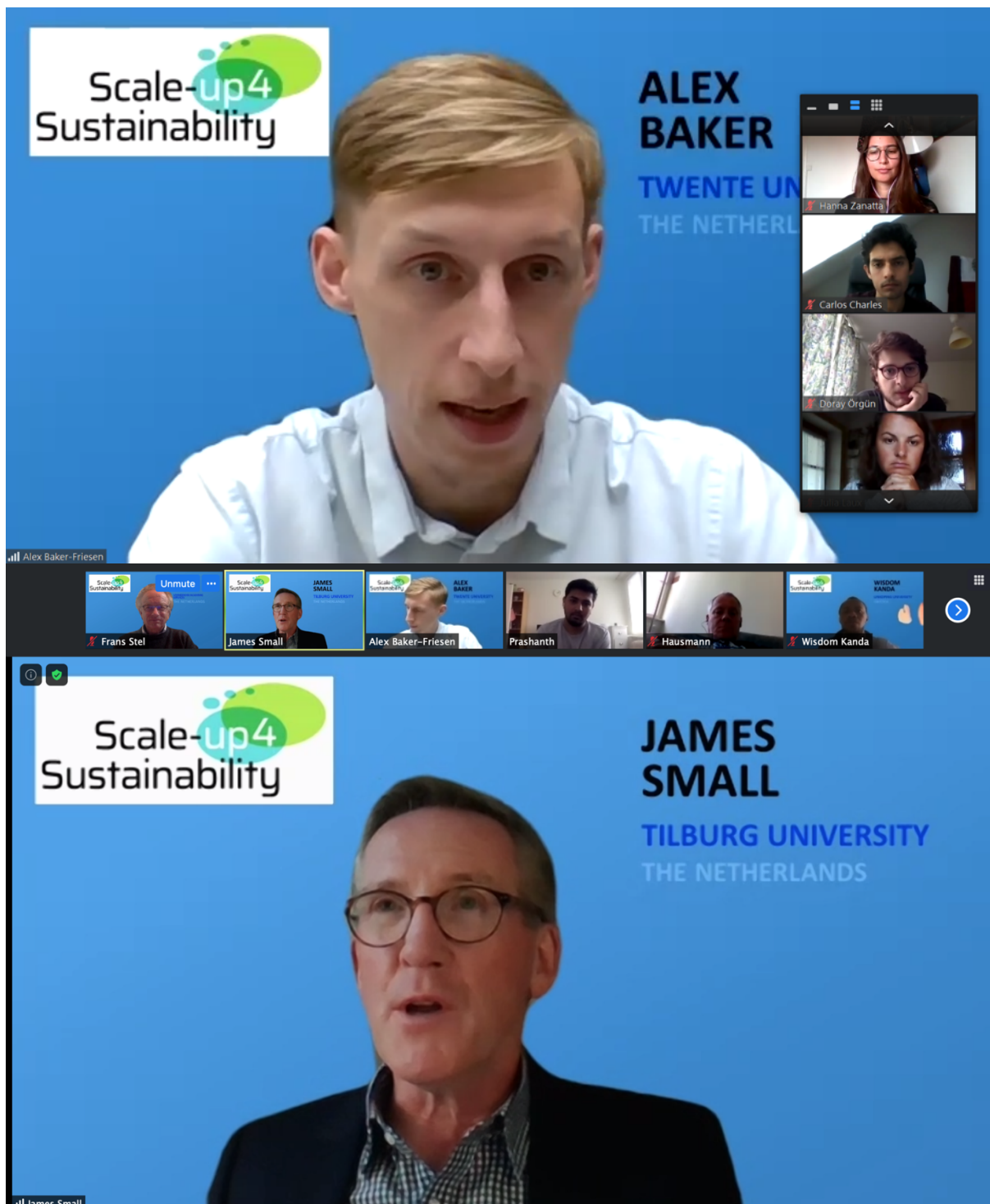
COLLABORATION



FEASIBILITY AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS

<p>EXPENSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEED TO CONTACT EXTERNAL DEVELOPERS • NEEDS MARKETING 	<p>POSITIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAN BE A COLLABORATION BETWEEN COMPANIES OR ASSOCIATIONS • CAN BE A COLLABORATION WITH UNIVERSITIES
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... followed by a Q&A of the businesses and the expert jury members...



The Circular challenge was organized by [Giulia Viero](#), project specialist of ECOR, [Rogier de Jong](#) and [Frans Stel](#).

Business presenters were: [Ricardo Weigend](#) (circular economy business developer ECOR, PhD-researcher), [Matthias Hausmann](#) (Director CEWE - chemistry & environment), [Sylvia Vespermann](#) (CEWE - chemistry & environment), [Sasha Bloemhof](#) (Marketing Director DSM Niaga)

The process coaches were: [Wisdom Kanda](#) (lecturer Linköping University) and [Frans Stel](#)

The jury consisted of: [Alex Baker-Friesen \(Coordinator Green Hub Twente, entrepreneur, PhD-researcher\)](#), [James Small \(prof. Tilburg University - sustainable entrepreneurship expert\)](#), [Jan Jurriëns \(prof. sustainable innovation - circular business models expert\)](#), [Eric Logtens \(Corporate Director ECOR - circular economy expert\)](#), [Matthias Hausmann \(Director CEWE - chemistry & environment\)](#) and [Sasha Bloemhof \(Marketing Director DSM Niaga\)](#)

The Circular Challenge is part of the European program “[Scale-up for Sustainability](#)”. In this program, we develop, test, exchange, and disseminate new innovative programs of student-business collaboration in green venturing. The standardized skills workshops are an example of developing sustainable entrepreneurship skills. The results of the comparative study will be published in scientific papers and presented at conferences.



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