

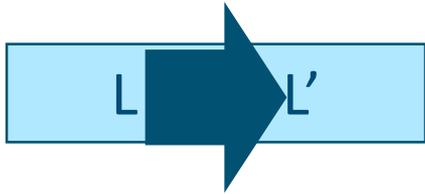
# Governing circular bio-economy through a small-wins strategy

Webinar: Economic perspectives and governance of transitions in the circular bio-based society 19/02/2021

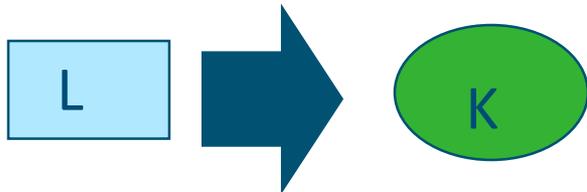
Professor Katrien Termeer, Wageningen University, the Netherlands



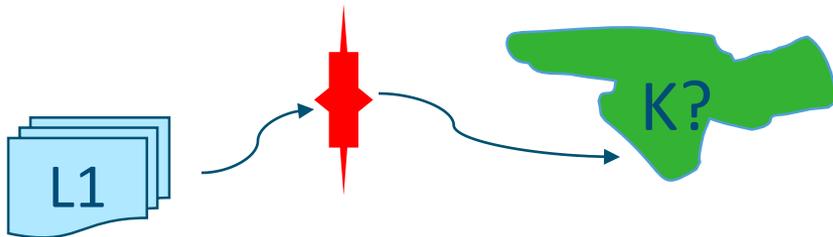
# Bio economy requires transformative change



**First order:  
improvement**

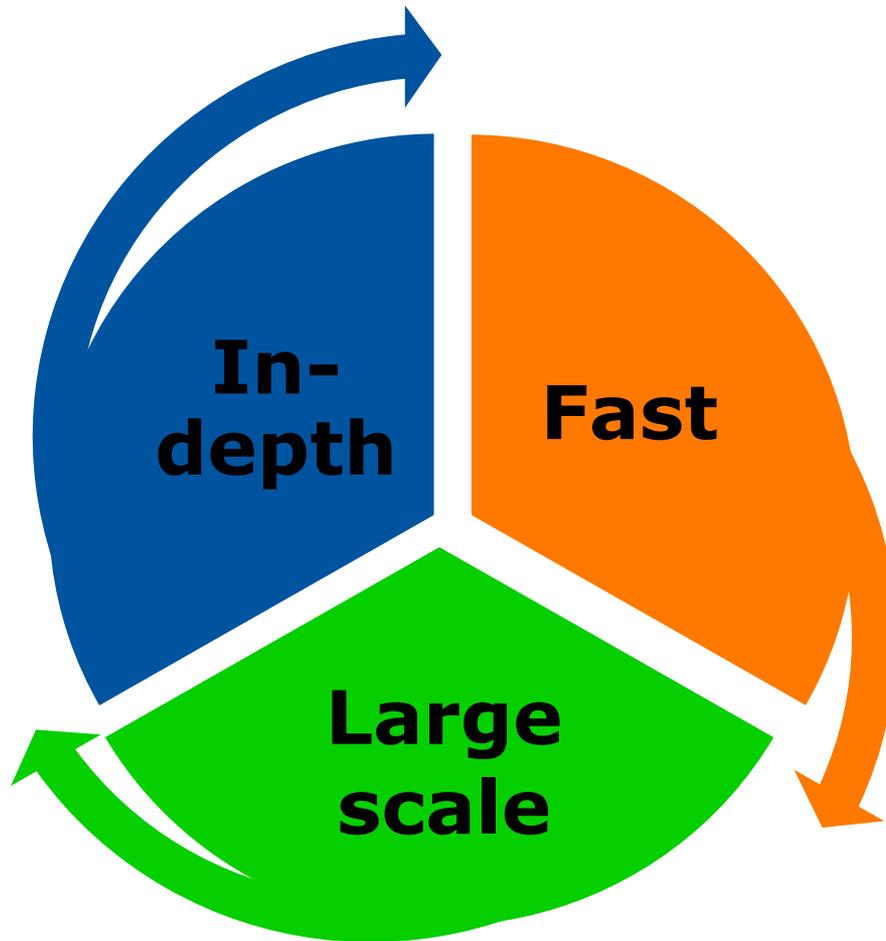


**Second order:  
transitions**



**Third order:  
transformation**

# Paradox of governing transformative change



# The “small wins” approach

Dealing with societal problems through small, but important steps with visible results, accumulating in transformative change

## Theoretical roots:

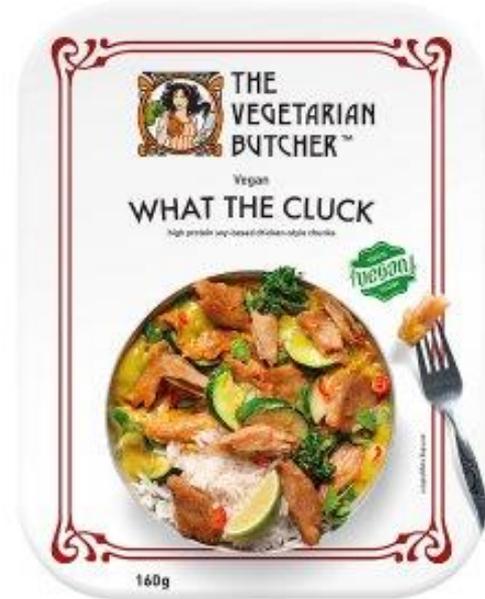
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# Examples of small wins



WASTED: A plastic upcycling initiative in Amsterdam Noord



# Why starting with “small wins” only?

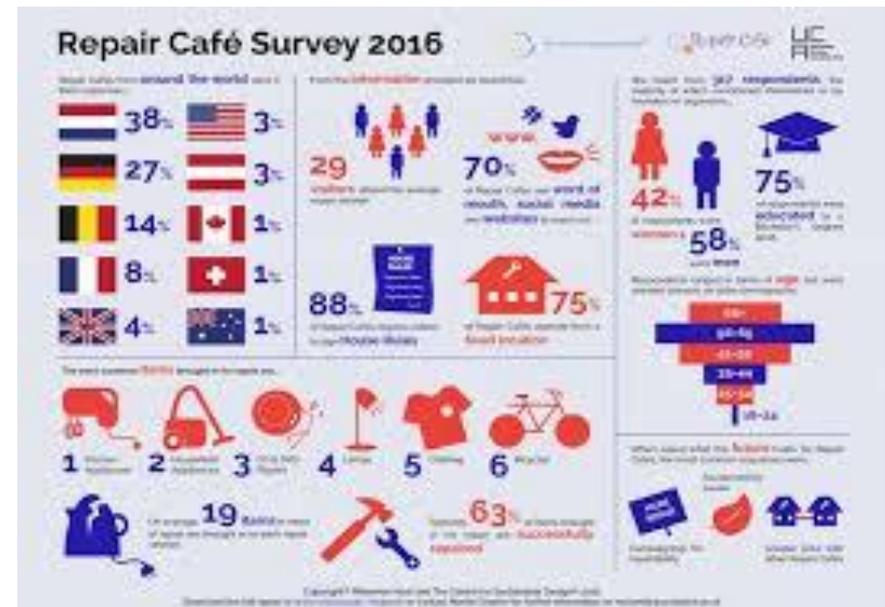
- **More in-depth:** Down-scaling moderates arousal and thus improves diagnosis and innovative tailored responses
- **Faster:** Less threatening and less (political) risks, allows for starting with incomplete information and uncertainties
- **Large scale:** Small wins can amplify and cumulate into large-scale transformations, from vicious to virtuous cycles



Characteristics of small wins	Indicator	Contra-indicator
Visible result	Experienced outcomes	Promises and ideas only
In-depth changes	Radical new practices Second- and third-order change	More of the same Low hanging fruit
Technical and social	Connections between social and technical innovations	Technical pilots only. New collaborations only
Place of energy	Enthusiasm, proud	Scepticism
Contribute to ambitions	Step forwards, related to shared ambitions	Small loss for many actors
Have overcome barriers	Tensions with norms. regulation, knowledge, business models, contracts	Quick fixes

# Three pathways for accumulation of small wins

- **Spreading:** 1650 Repair Cafés in 35 countries
- **Broadening:** coupling with care, social coherence, appreciation of technical skills, city restoration..
- **Deepening:** information for re-design



- Visible result
- In-depth change
- Technical & social
- Place of energy
- Contribute to ambition
- Have overcome barriers

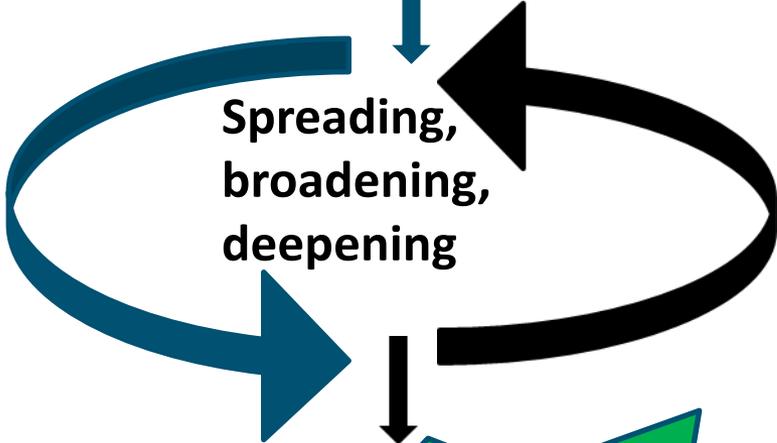
Ambition

A single small win

Propelling mechanisms

1. Energizing
2. Experimenting
3. Logic of attraction
4. Robustness
5. Coupling

Policy interventions



Series of small wins and transformative change

<b>Propelling mechanism</b>	<b>Productive governmental interventions</b>	<b>Counterproductive governmental intervention</b>
<b>Energising</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ambitious policy plans</li> <li>Encouraging environment</li> <li>Creating an enthusiastic community</li> <li>Involving many people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disqualifying laggards</li> <li>Not involving innovative initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Experimenting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sparring partner</li> <li>Facilitating learning communities</li> <li>European programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Job rotations</li> <li>Bypassing existing experiments by developing new ones</li> <li>Not tolerating tensions with regulations after initial experiments</li> <li>Not learning from how actors have overcome barriers</li> </ul>
<b>Logic of attraction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small subsidies to convince regular financial institutions to step in</li> <li>Showing trust in an initiative</li> <li>Showcasing at events or in policy documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Framing small steps as peanuts</li> <li>Asking too much of organisations with little capacity</li> </ul>
<b>Coupling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process money</li> <li>Mainstreaming in other policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issuing separate plans to compensate for social effects of circular economy policies</li> <li>Designating money for a specific purpose</li> </ul>
<b>Robustness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pervasiveness of ambitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jumping from experiment to experiment</li> <li>Abolishing effective interventions prematurely</li> <li>Discontinuity in policies</li> </ul>

# Governing circular bio-economy

- Small wins do not combine in a neat, linear, serial form, with each step being closer to a predetermined goal
- Non linear strategy:
  - Setting an (provocative) ambition
  - Noticing, valuing and initiating small wins
  - Activating propelling mechanisms to amplify them
  - Appreciating small wins and feeding them back into the process, where they in turn activate propelling mechanisms



**In stead of**



# Thanks!

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