

## Better, not more

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## 11.1 SOCIETAL IMPACT OF THIS THESIS

The aim of the thesis research was to better understand companies that promote sufficiency. Linked to that, the author aimed to broadcast the idea of sufficiency and the need for it, as well as the reality of businesses already promoting “enough”. The author aimed to create societal impact in a variety of ways, detailed here in turn: through public speaking, additional publications, open access tools, policy work and an academic network.

The author promoted sufficiency ideas and insights gained on sufficiency businesses through frequent public speaking. During the four years of her PhD, she gave over 20 talks and lectures, in addition to presentations at academic conferences and lectures to students as part of her teaching role at Maastricht University. These talks were often public, for instance speaking at the York Festival of Ideas 2021 or at a webinar as part of a Webinar Series on Sustainable Lifestyles organised by SSCP KAN and Future Earth in 2024. Other talks were more targeted at specific audiences, for instance giving talks to students, business delegations or academics. One example would be a talk for the Symposium Refuse and Rethink organised by the Dutch Rijkswaterstaat in early 2024 to move (design) higher education into the direction of rethinking and refusing consumption. Following up on that lecture, the author is currently involved in discussions to set up a Dutch Sufficiency Coalition to promote sufficiency in politics, business and society in the Netherlands.

While the thesis comprises six publications, the author worked on other publications during the course of her PhD, including peer-reviewed journal publications and contributions to books and handbooks. A list of other publications can be found on page xi. By contributing to the academic debate, the author intended to spread the idea of sufficiency business and reach a variety of audiences (in sustainability sciences, business, marketing, etc.). One important step in promoting sufficiency businesses to a wider audience was the co-editing of the book “Sufficiency in Business” with Maike Gossen. The book compiles contributions from various authors that present examples of sufficiency-oriented firms, discuss barriers and opportunities and suggest far-reaching changes required for a paradigm shift. The book was published in April 2024 and is available to the public as an open access publication.

The tools created during the course of this PhD were and are being made publicly available. The Business for Sufficiency database can be accessed through the Circular X project website (<https://www.circularx.eu/en/tool/26/business-for-sufficiency-database>). Between its set-up in 2022 and early 2024, the database had been accessed over 1,800 times. The second tool, the Road to Flourishing game,

was developed in workshops with students, academics, consultants and businesses. These workshops were offered to businesses as part of circular business model workshops or as events during the Dutch Week of the Circular Economy. The game has been developed and evaluated (see Chapter 9) and will be made publicly available to play both online and in person. The game is being translated into Spanish by interested academics in Argentina.

The author furthermore contributed to policy development for sufficiency and sufficiency businesses. She co-authored a policy brief on circular business models, sufficiency and regeneration, which was launched at an event with over 100 regional stakeholders in Limburg. She also joined the EU-funded SSH CENTRE Knowledge Brokerage project. This project brought together researchers from across the EU to help partner cities in their development towards sustainability. The author was part of the team advising the City of Grenoble (France) on its journey of promoting sufficiency-oriented behaviour change to citizens and how to improve transversality across the municipality on that topic. A two-day workshop took place in April 2024 with staff members from Grenoble municipality, elected representatives and stakeholders from other European cities and a follow-up report with recommendations is being prepared.

Finally, the author joined forces with her colleagues Maïke Gossen and Laura Beyeler in setting up an informal research network around sufficiency in business. This research network brings together academics and others to exchange knowledge about sufficiency in business. Set-up in 2021 as an exchange between colleagues, the network has grown to almost 30 members that come together at monthly meetings and share a mailing list.