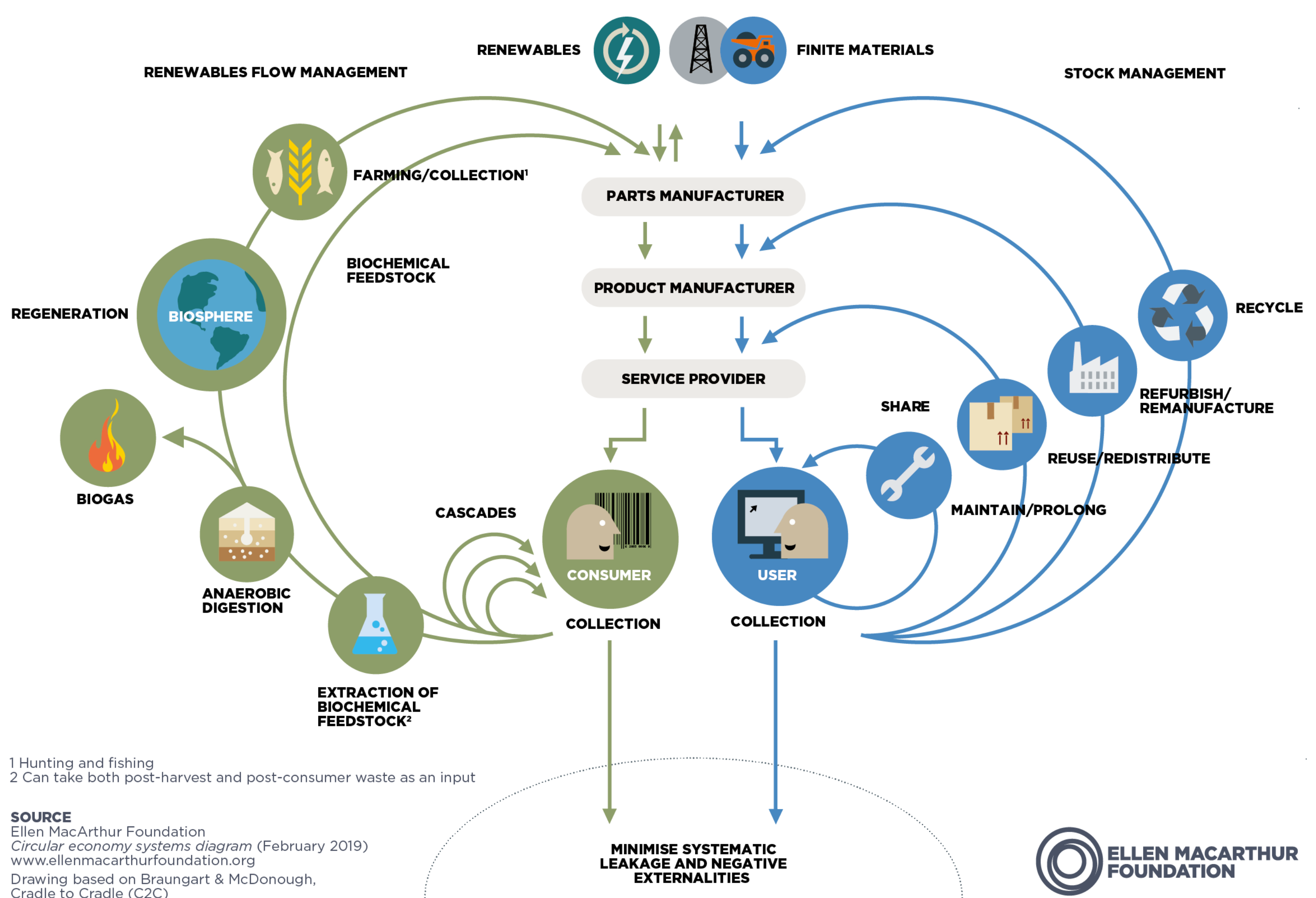


Designing for the circular economy



The Ellen MacArthur Foundation ‘butterfly diagram’ illustrates the continuous flow of materials in a circular economy. The left hand side shows the biological cycle where biodegradable materials can return to the Earth and their nutrients can help to regenerate nature. The right hand side of the diagram is the technical cycle that focuses on materials such as metal and plastic. Here, materials and products can be kept in circulation by reusing, repairing, remanufacturing or recycling.

The design concepts presented in the exhibition mostly engage with the technical cycle. The Right to Repair movement empowers users to maintain their products and prolong the usable lifespan, following the second loop of the technical cycle. Keeping our products in use for longer reduces waste and the demand for new products whilst supporting a repair service economy.

The design examples displayed below are precedents that have informed the students’ work:

- The R600 Roberts Radio can be easily accessed for repairs. The wooden panels age well compared to plastic. The repaired handle evokes an enduring emotional narrative.
- The Fairphone 2 consists of modular components that allow for easy repair. The screen, battery, microphone and speaker modules can be simply accessed and replaced in minutes by the user.
- The Open Funk re:Mix blender has a 100% recycled plastic case and a modular design to make it easy to repair. The product is also designed to re-use standard glass jars.

‘We must transform every element of our take-make-waste system: how we manage resources, how we make and use products, and what we do with the materials afterwards’ Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2024