

# Circular Economy Compatible Power Electronics

Johann W. Kolar et al.



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Power Electronic Systems Laboratory  
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*Sept. 2, 2024*



# **“Zero-EOL-Waste” Power Electronics**

**Johann W. Kolar | Jonas Huber | Luc Imperiali**



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## Outline



- ▶ *Decarbonization*
- ▶ *Critical Raw Materials*
- ▶ *Low Carbon Footprint Design*
- ▶ *Closing the Loop*
- ▶ *ECPE\* Roadmap*

### Acknowledgment

A. Anurag  
R. Wang  
P. Barbosa

## ***Decarbonization***

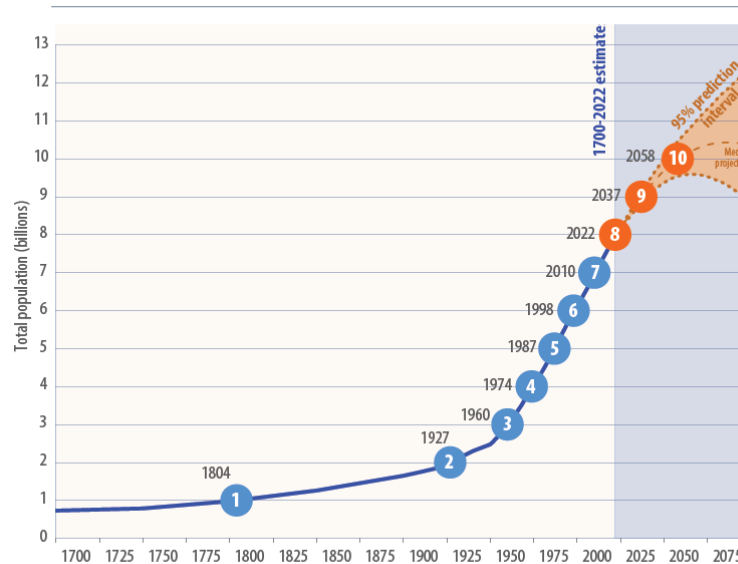
*Renewable Energy*  
*Critical Raw Materials*



# The Challenge 1/2

- **Growth of World Population & Growth of Energy Use per Capita**
- **1980 — 4.4 Billion |  $\approx 10$  TW.yr  $\rightarrow$  2022 —  $\approx 8$  Billion | 20.4 TW.yr**

**Global population size: estimates for 1700-2022 and projections for 2022-2100**

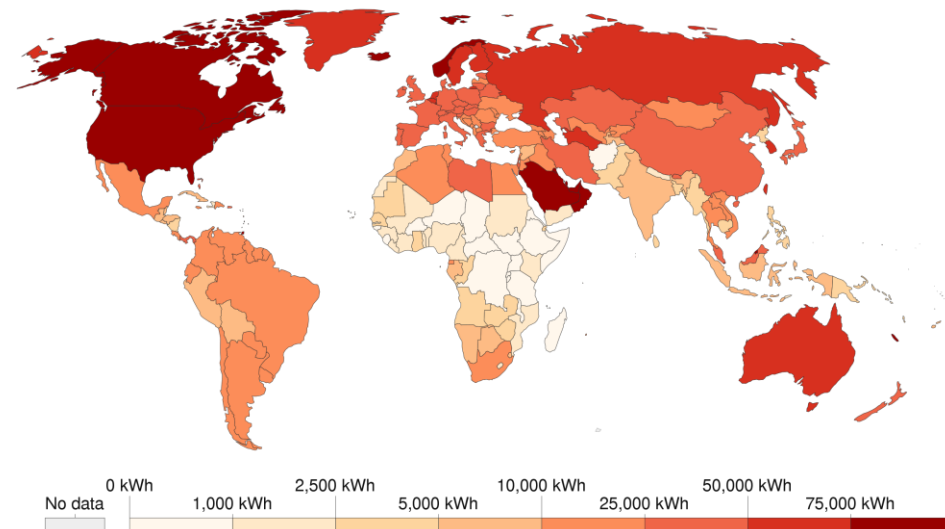


Source: United Nations, DESA, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022.

**Energy use per person, 2021**

Energy use not only includes electricity, but also other areas of consumption including transport, heating and cooking.

Our World in Data



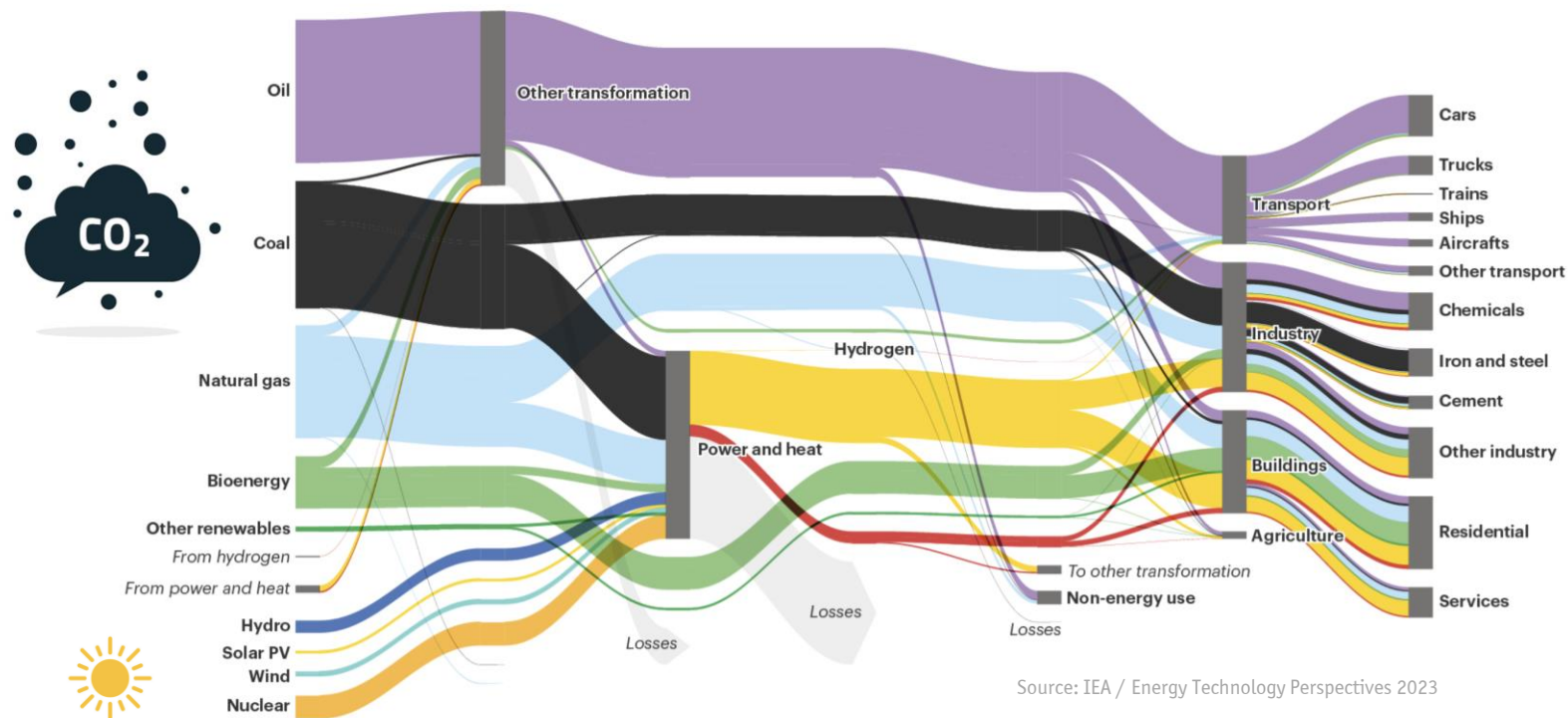
Source: Our World in Data based on BP & Shift Data Portal

Note: Energy refers to primary energy – the energy input before the transformation to forms of energy for end-use (such as electricity or petrol for transport).

- **2022 Global Energy Consumption per Capita — 22'400 kWh avg. | 2.6 kW avg. (2.3 kW avg. in 1980)**

## The Challenge 2/2

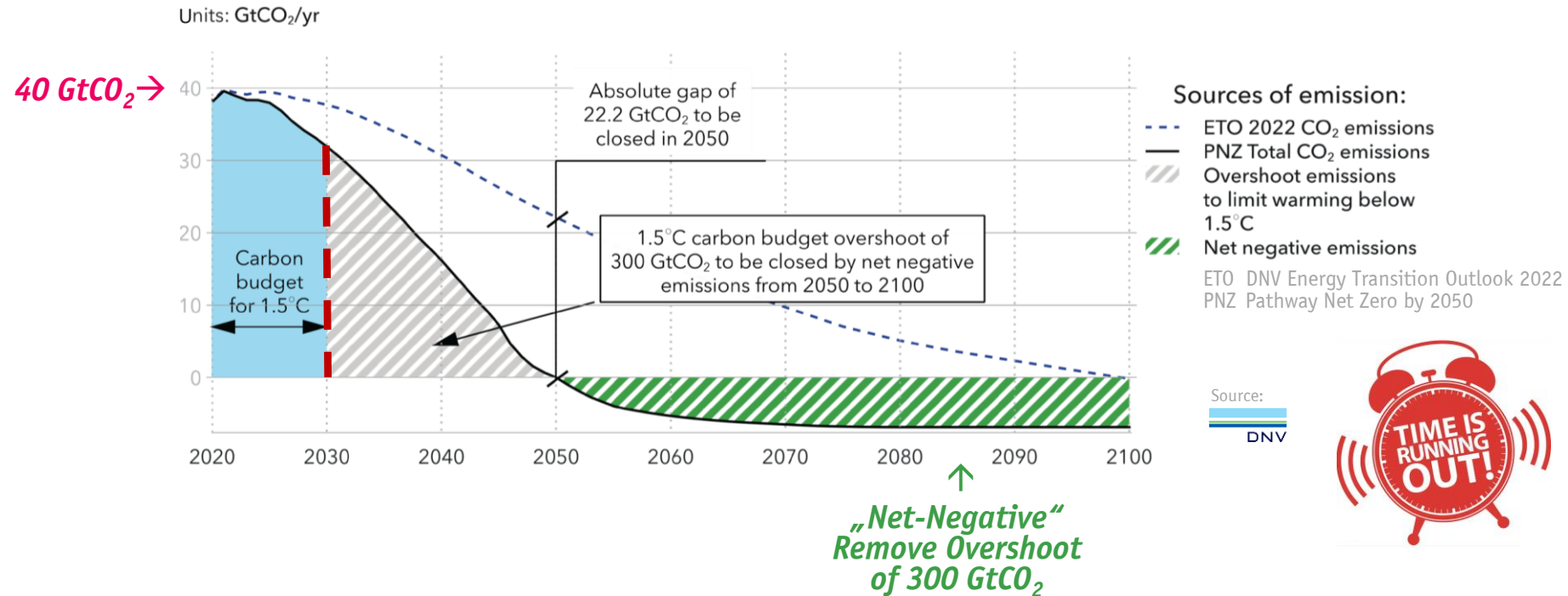
- Coal & Oil Powered the 1<sup>st</sup> Industrial Revolution (1750) / Enabled Mechanization



- Global Energy Flows — 2021
- World Economy Heavily Depends on Fossil Fuels (!)

# Decarbonization / Defossilization

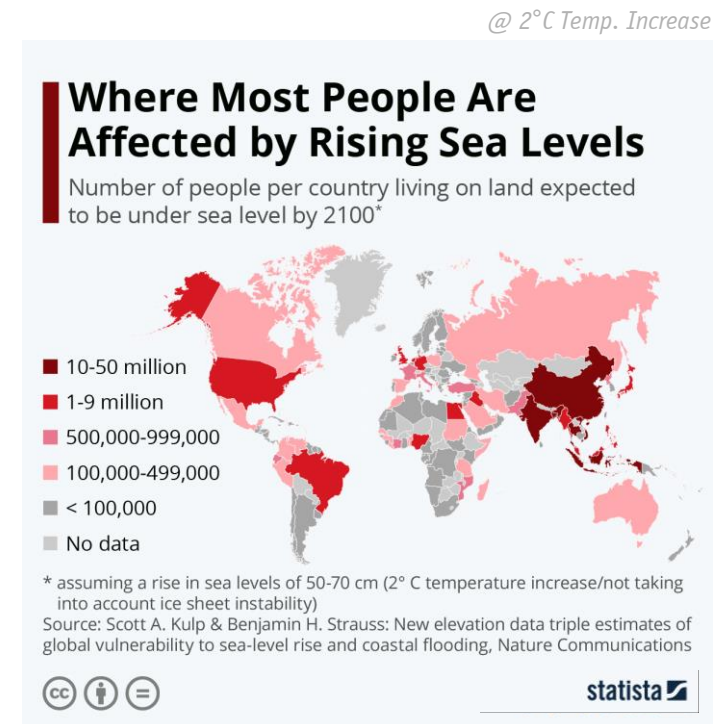
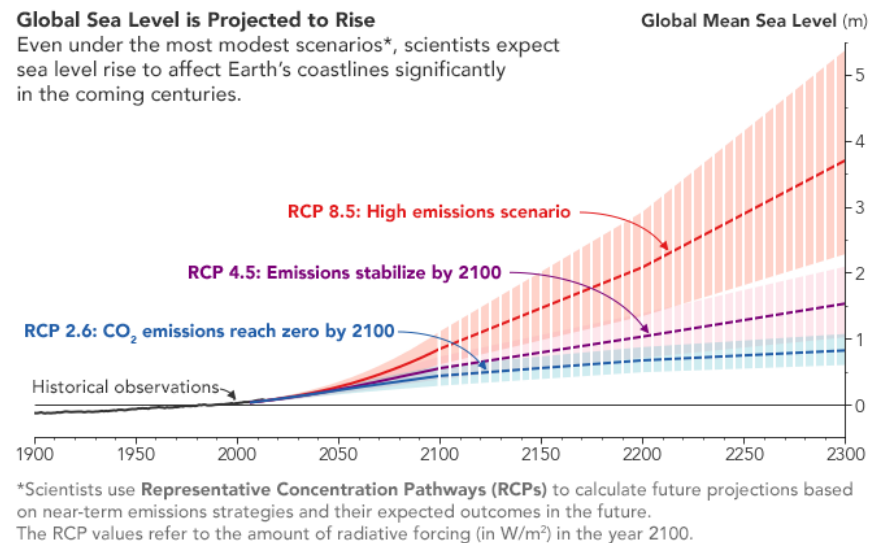
- **"Net-Zero" Emissions by 2050 & Gap to be Closed**
- **50 GtCO<sub>2eq</sub> Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions / Year → 280 GtCO<sub>2</sub> Budget Left for 1.5°C Limit**



- **Human History — Transition from Lower to Higher Energy Density Fuels — Wood → Coal → Oil & Gas**
- **Challenge of Stepping Back from Oil & Gas to Low Energy Density Renewables**

# Global Sea Levels by 2100 1/2

- **Rising Sea Levels Due to Global Warming**
- **IPCC Predictions for Low/High Emissions Scenario**



- **200 Million People will Globally Live Below the Sea Level Line by 2100**
- **Add. 160 Million Affected by Higher Annual Flooding Due to Rising Ocean Levels**



# Global Sea Levels by 2100 2/2

## Rising Sea Levels Due to Global Warming

Source: [The Guardian](#)

How the dyke compares to other projects

**300 miles**

The proposed Scotland to Norway dyke

**100 miles**

Danyang-Kunshan Grand Bridge, China

**50 miles**

Panama Canal

**20 miles**

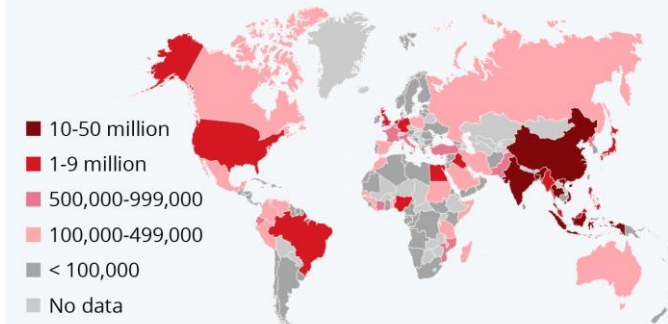
Saemangeum sea wall, South Korea



@ 2°C Temp. Increase

## Where Most People Are Affected by Rising Sea Levels

Number of people per country living on land expected to be under sea level by 2100\*



\* assuming a rise in sea levels of 50-70 cm (2°C temperature increase/not taking into account ice sheet instability)  
Source: Scott A. Kulp & Benjamin H. Strauss; New elevation data triple estimates of global vulnerability to sea-level rise and coastal flooding, Nature Communications



statista

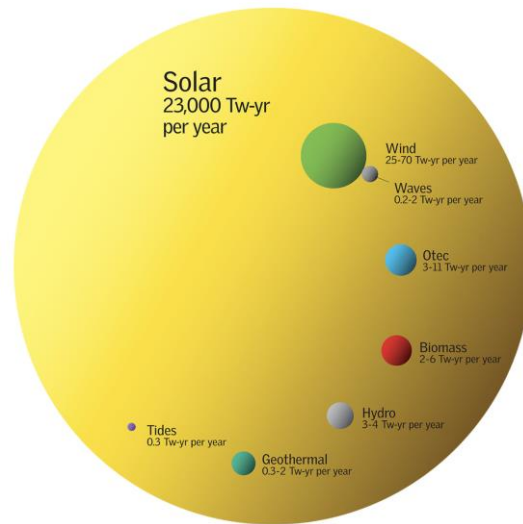
**North Sea Enclosure Dyke — Mammoth Dams Envisioned to Protect 25 Million Europeans — €250bn ... €500bn**

# The Opportunity

(2009) 16 TW-yr — 16 Tw-yr per year — 27 TW-yr (2050)

Renewable energy resources per year

100% Conv. Efficiency  
Excl. Oceans



Note: Graphical  
Representation Assumes  
Spheres Not Circles

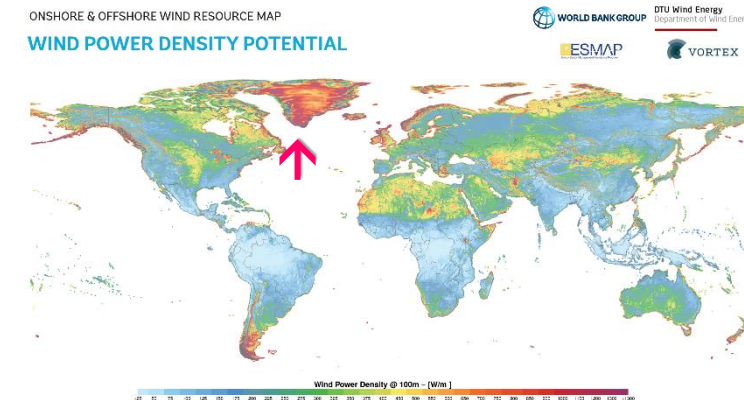
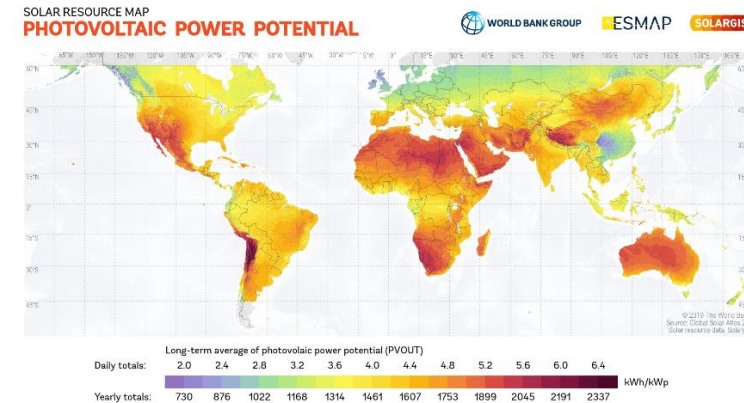
Primary Consumption:  
16TW-yr → 27TW-yr  
Final Consumption:  
11TW-yr → 15TW-yr

Source: R. Perez et al.,  
IEA SHC Program Solar  
Update (2009)

Fossil energy resources - total reserve left on earth

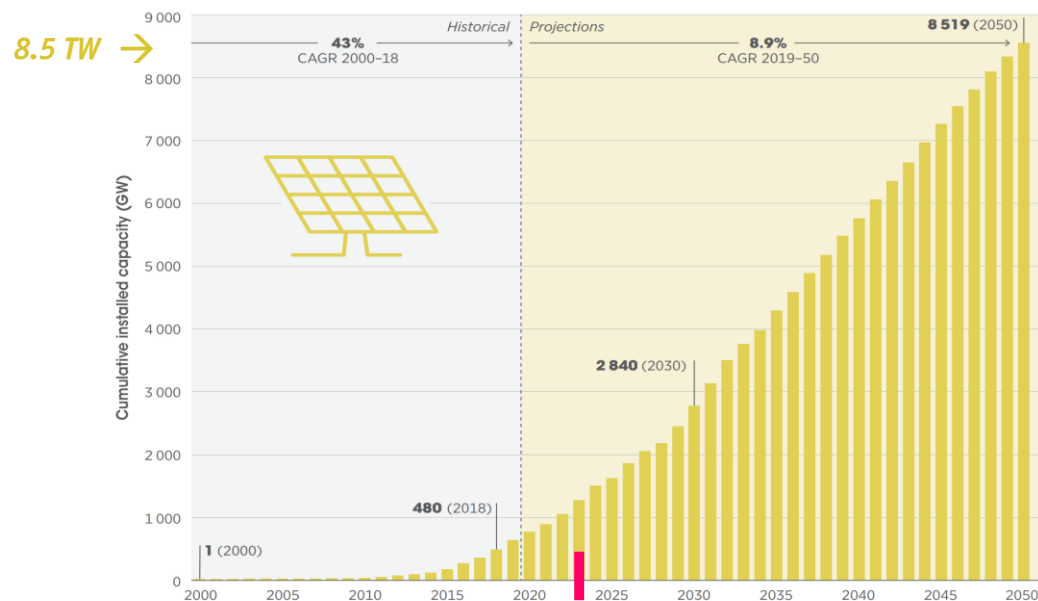


## Global Distribution of Solar & Wind Resources



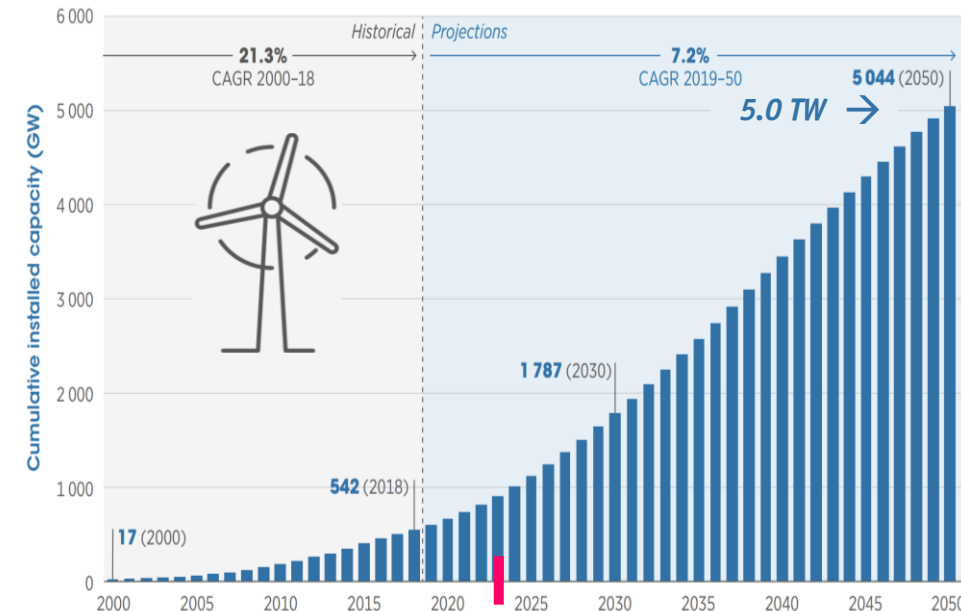
# PV & Wind Power Installations

- Outlook of Global Cumulative Installations Until 2050 / Add. 1000 GW Off-Shore Wind Power
- In 2050 Deployment of 370 GW/Year (PV) & 200 GW/Year (On-Shore Wind) incl. Replacements



Sources: Historical values based on IRENA's renewable energy statistics (IRENA, 2019c) and future projections based on IRENA's analysis (2019a).

- CAGR of  $\approx 9\%$  up to 2050 → 8500 GW

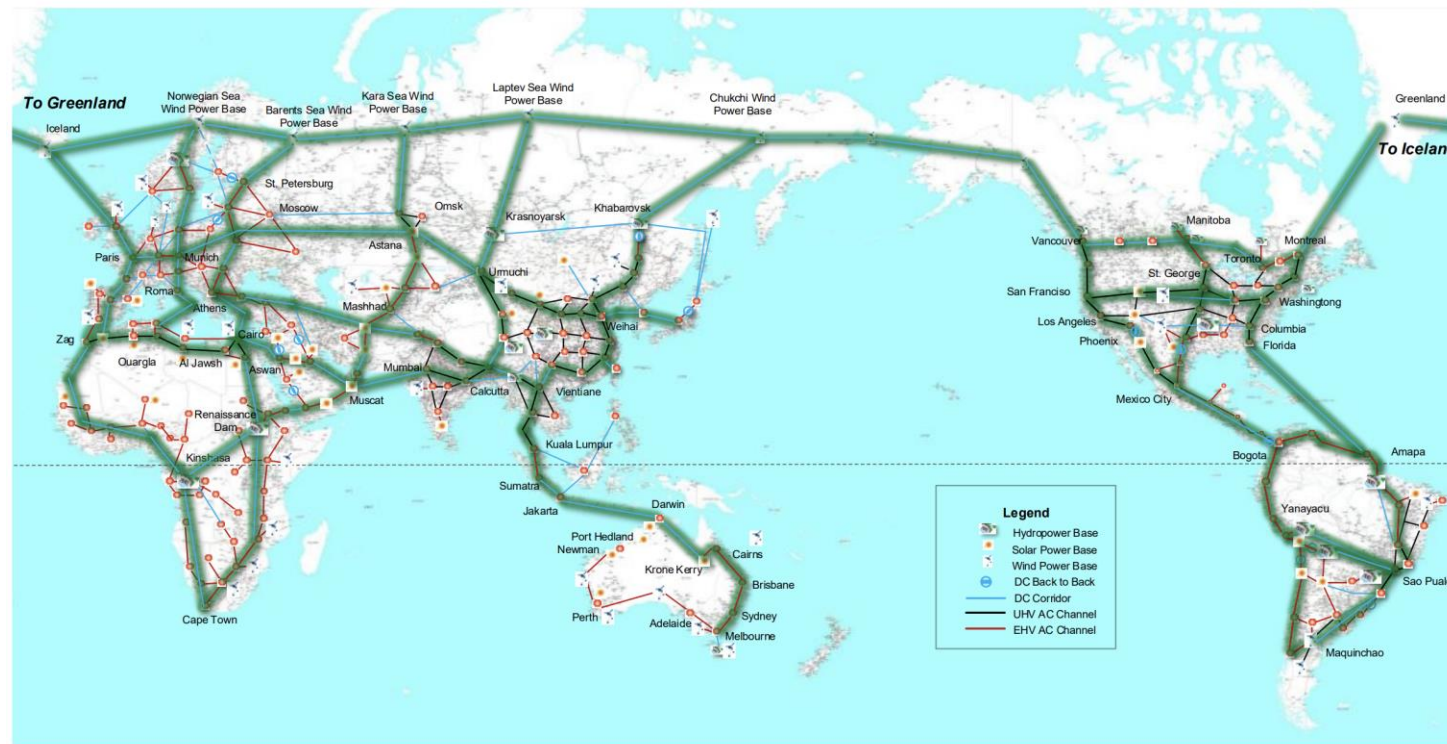


Source: Historical values based on IRENA's renewable capacity statistics (IRENA, 2019d) and future projections based on IRENA analysis (IRENA, 2019a).

- CAGR of  $\approx 7\%$  up to 2050 → 5000 GW

# Aiming for a Global Solution (?)

- “Super/Mega/Overlay Grid”-Concepts Proposed since 1950s — *GENESIS (1994), DESERTEC (2003), etc.*
- *U-HVDC Trans-Continental or Multi-National Supply & Trade of Clean Electricity*

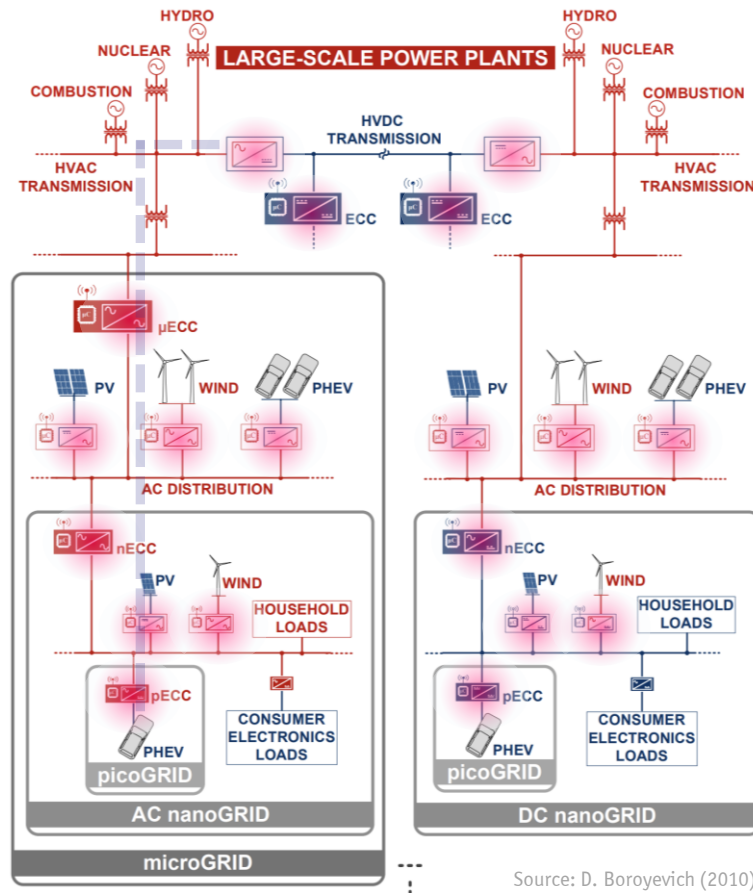


Source: GEIDCO 2018


- Example of the “Global Energy Interconnection Backbone Grid” (GEIDCO) Proposed by China in 2015



# The in the Room



Source: D. Boroyevich (2010)

- Global Population by 2050 — **10bn**  **2.5 kW/Capita**
- **25'000 GW** Installed Ren. Generation in 2050
- **4x Power Electr. Conversion** btw Generation & Load
- **100'000 GW** of Installed Converter Power
- **20 Years** of Useful Life



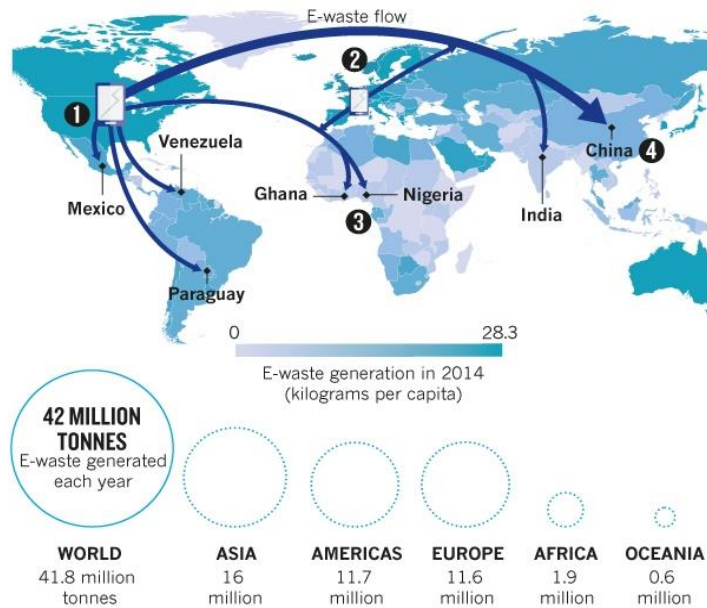
Source: [www.e-waste-recyclers.co.in](http://www.e-waste-recyclers.co.in)

- **5'000 GW<sub>eq</sub>** = **5'000'000'000 kW<sub>eq</sub>** of E-Waste / Year (!)
- **10'000'000'000 \$** of Potential Value

# The in the Room

- 52'000'000 Tons of Electronic Waste Produced Worldwide in 2021 → 74'000'000 Tons in 2030
- Increasingly Complex Constructions → No Repair or Recycling

Source:  
Green IT  
Solution



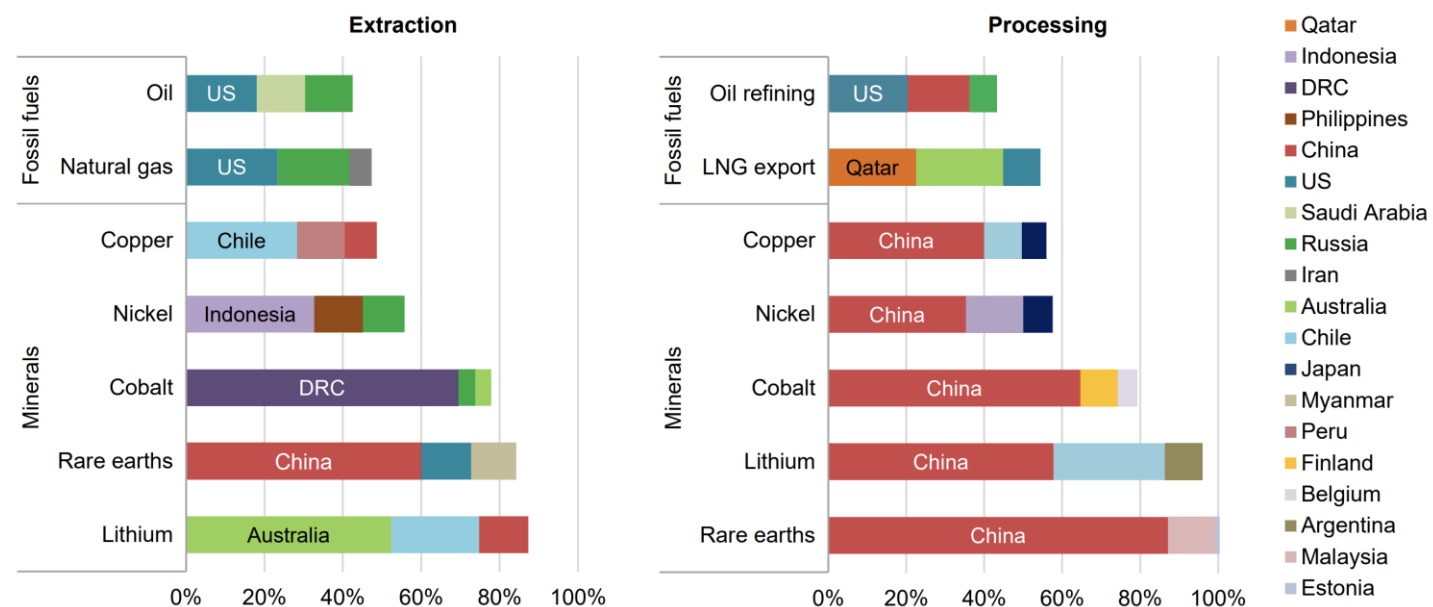
Source: nature



- Growing Global E-Waste Streams → Regulations Mandatory (!)

# Critical Minerals

## ■ Production of Selected Minerals Critical for the Clean Energy Transition



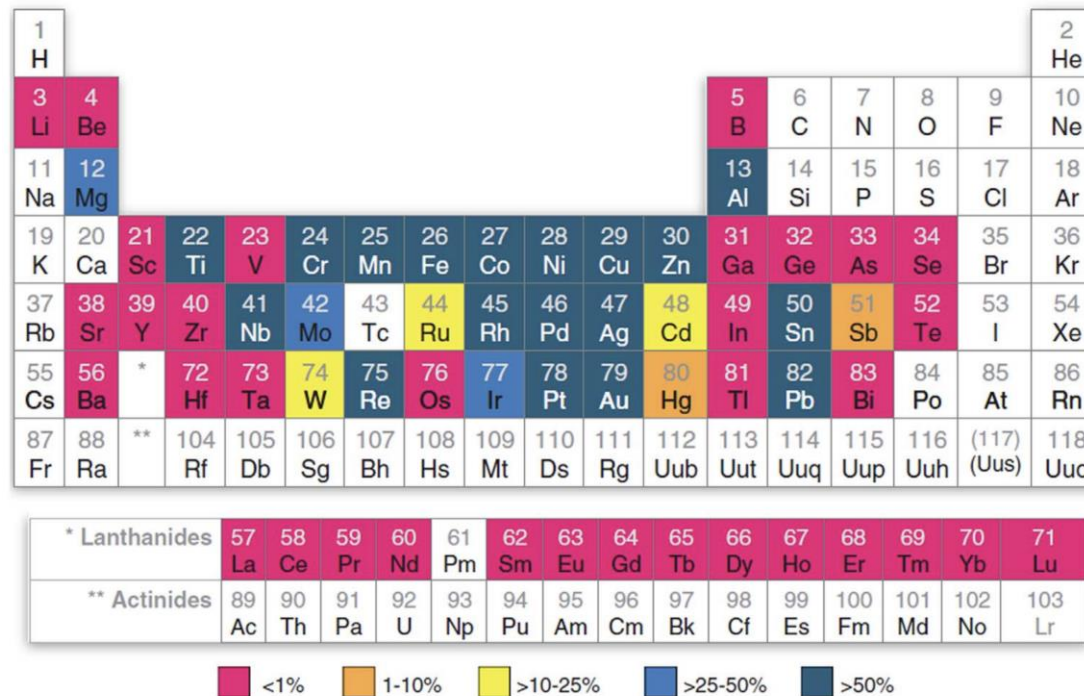
Source: IEA /  
The Role of Critical  
Minerals in Clean Energy  
Transitions (2021)

Shares of top three producing countries, 2019

## ■ Extraction & Processing More Geographically Concentrated than for Oil & Nat. Gas (!)

# End-of-Life Recycling Rates of Metals

## ■ Global Estimates of EOL-RRs of 60 Metals & Metalloids (2008)



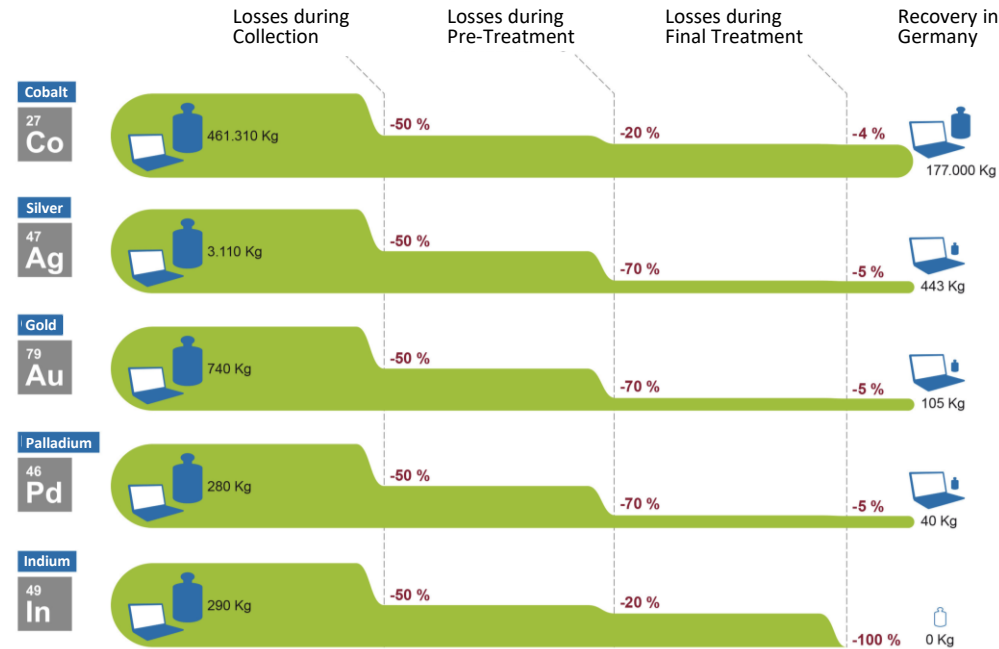
Source:  
J. Song et al., 2018 /  
T.E. Graedel et al., 2011

- **Partly Very Low EOL-RRs**
- **Rel. Low Efficiency in Collection & Processing of Most Discarded Products & Low \$\$\$ of Primary Material**



# Raw Material Losses in Notebook Recycling

## ■ Weight Data Based on Notebooks Sold in Germany in 2010

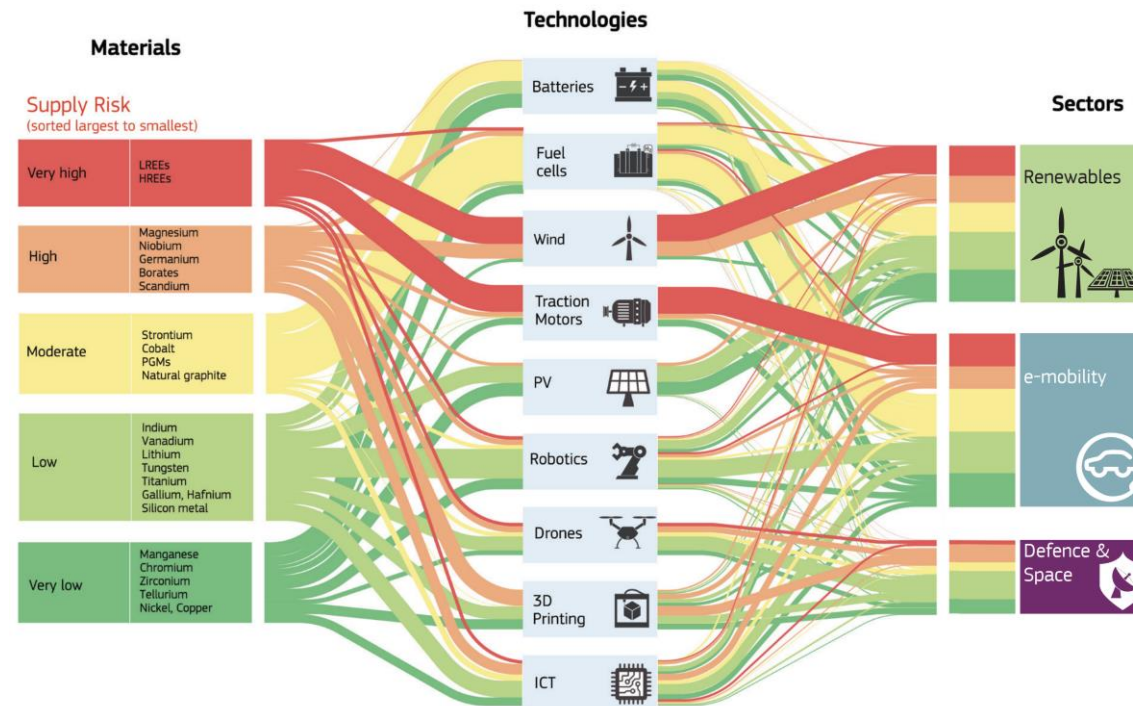


Source:  Öko-Institut e.V.  
Institut für angewandte Ökologie  
Institut für Applied Ecology

- *Missing Recovery of Low Concentration Precious Metals*
- *Recycling Hampered by Product Design, Recycling Technology, Social Behavior, Etc. — „Trapped Resources“*

# EU Critical Raw Materials Act

- *Europe's / Global Green Transition → Substantial Increase in Demand for Critical Raw Materials*
- *Geospatial Concentration of Supply Chains / Significant Geopolitical Risks*



Source:  European Commission

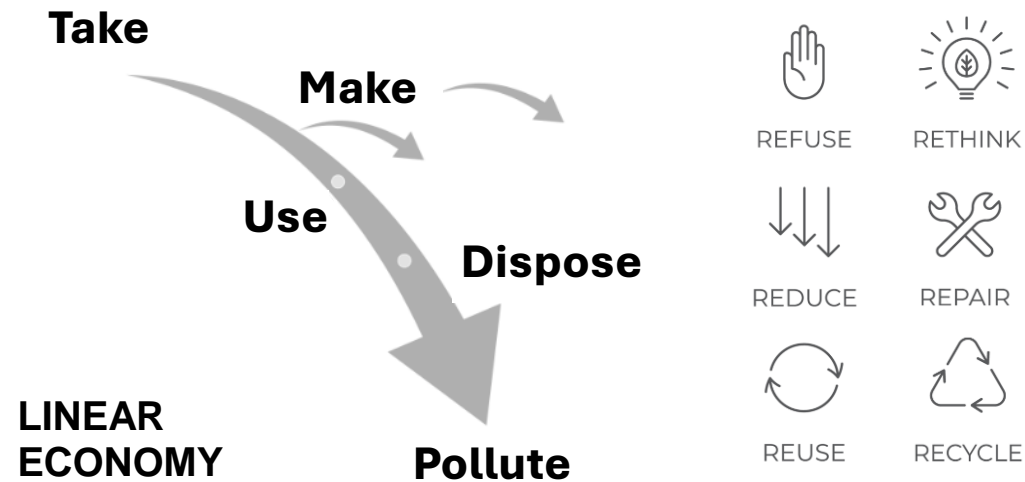
- *Access to Secure & Sustainable CRMs Supply Crucial for Achieving the 2030 Climate & Digital Objectives*
- *EU Critical Raw Material (CRM) Act 2024 → Sustainability & Circularity of CRMs on the EU Market*

**Action #1**  
***“Do More With Less”***

***Basic Scaling Laws***  
***Enabling Technologies***

# The Paradigm Shift

- Growing Global E-Waste Streams / < 20% Recycled
- 120'000'000 Tons of Global E-Waste in 2050



Source: CC 3.0 Catherine Weetman 2016

## The Waste Hierarchy



Source:  
UTS — Institute for  
Sustainable Futures  
UTS:ISF

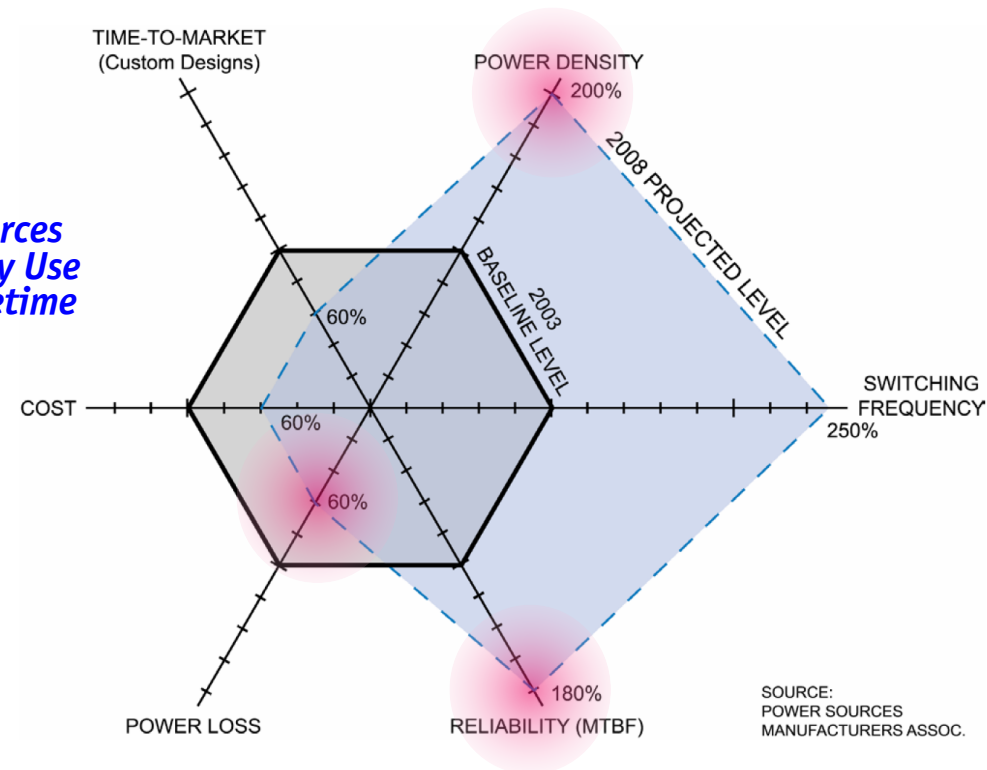
- "Linear" Economy / Take-Make-Dispose → "6Rs" Towards Perpetual Flow of Resources / "Circular" Economy
- Recycling Aluminum 95% More Energy Efficient, Plastic 85%, Paper 50%, Glass 40% — "Downgrading" Problem



# “Avoid and Reduce”

- *Today's Power Electronics Innovation Basically Contributes to Lower Environmental Impact*

- **Power Density** → **Red. of Resources**
- **Efficiency** → **Red. of Energy Use**
- **Robustness** → **Increased Lifetime**

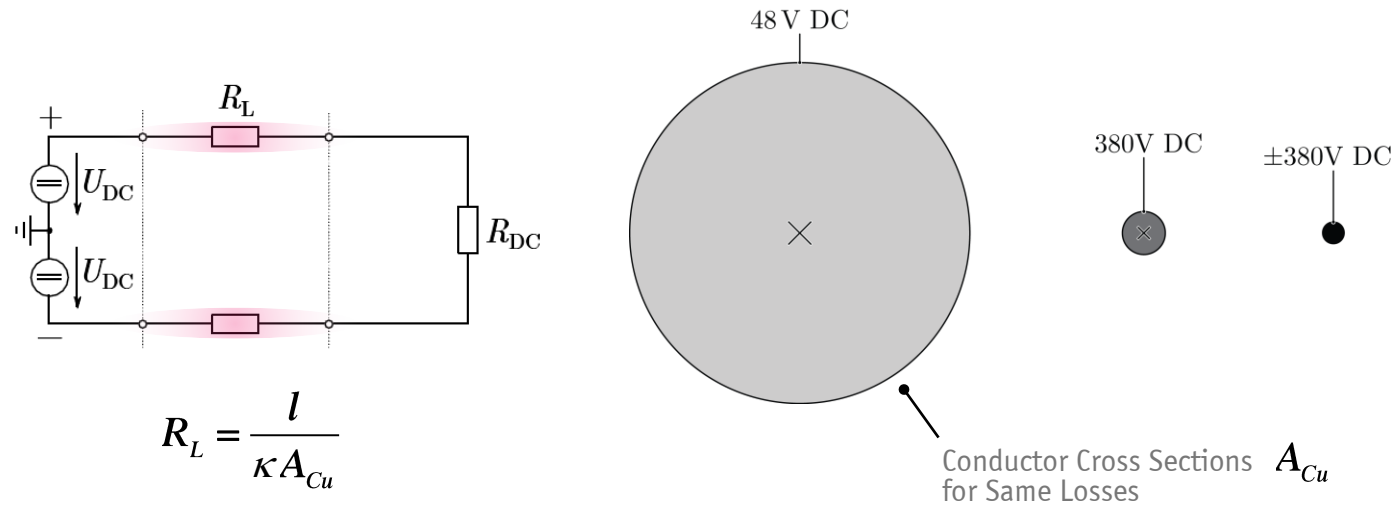


- **New Set of KPIs Mandatory to Meet Future Environmental Protection Objectives**

# Scaling of DC Power System Losses

- Increase of  $R_L$  with Transmission Distance  $l$
- Red. of  $R_L$  only Through Larger Conductor Cross Section  $A_{Cu}$

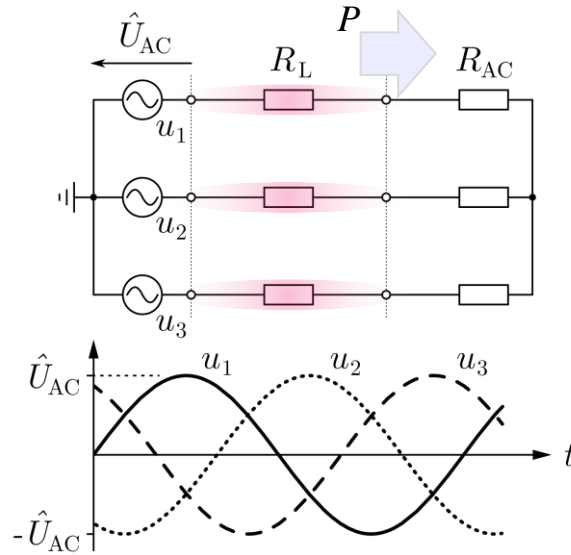
→ Transmission Losses  $P_{V,DC} = 2 \cdot \left(\frac{P}{2U_{DC}}\right)^2 \cdot R_L \sim \frac{1}{U_{DC}^2}$



- Quadratic (!) Dependency of Losses on Voltage Level
- Allows Massive Reduction of Conductor Cross Section with Increasing Operating Voltage

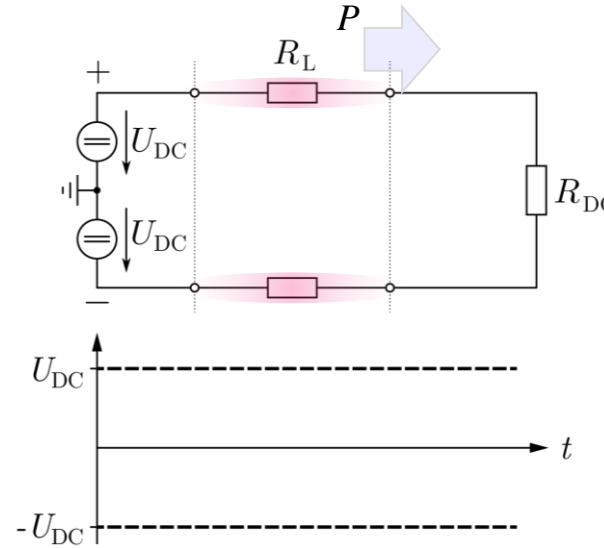
# 3-Φ AC vs. DC Power Transmission

- **DC Voltage** → **Max. Utilization of Isolation Voltage** → **Lower Losses & Less Conductor Material (!)**



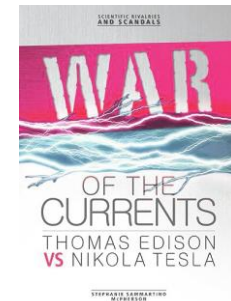
$$P_{V,AC} = 3 \cdot \left( \frac{\frac{1}{3}P}{U_{AC}} \right)^2 \cdot R_L$$

$$\frac{P_{V,DC}}{P_{V,AC}} = \frac{3}{2} \cdot \left( \frac{U_{AC}}{U_{DC}} \right)^2 \mid U_{DC} = \hat{U}_{AC} = \sqrt{2} U_{AC} = 0.75$$



$$P_{V,DC} = 2 \cdot \left( \frac{P}{2U_{DC}} \right)^2 \cdot R_L$$

- **Transformation of DC Voltage Level Requires Power Electr. Interfaces / "DC-Transformers" (!)**



# Classical Transformer — Scaling Law

- **Magnetic Core Cross Section**  $A_{Core} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}\pi} \frac{U_1}{\hat{B}_{max} f} \frac{1}{N_1}$

- **Winding Window**  $A_{Wdg} = \frac{2I_1}{k_W J_{rms}} N_1$

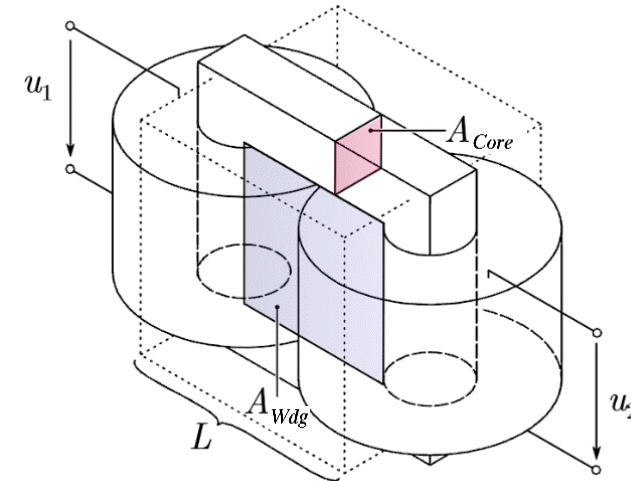
- **Construction Volume**

$$A_{Core} A_{Wdg} = \frac{\sqrt{2}}{\pi} \frac{P_t}{k_W J_{rms} \hat{B}_{max} f} \propto L^4$$

$\uparrow$     $\uparrow$     $\uparrow$

$P_t$  .... Rated Power  
 $k_W$  .... Window Utilization Factor  
 $\hat{B}_{max}$  .. Flux Density Amplitude  
 $J_{rms}$  ... Winding Current Density  
 $f$  ..... Frequency

- **Low Frequency** → **Large Weight / Volume**
- **Trade-off** → **Volume vs. Efficiency**





# Low $R_{DS(on)}^*$ High-Voltage Devices

- **SiC MOSFETs / GaN HEMTs**
- **Low Conduction Losses**
- **High Efficiency**

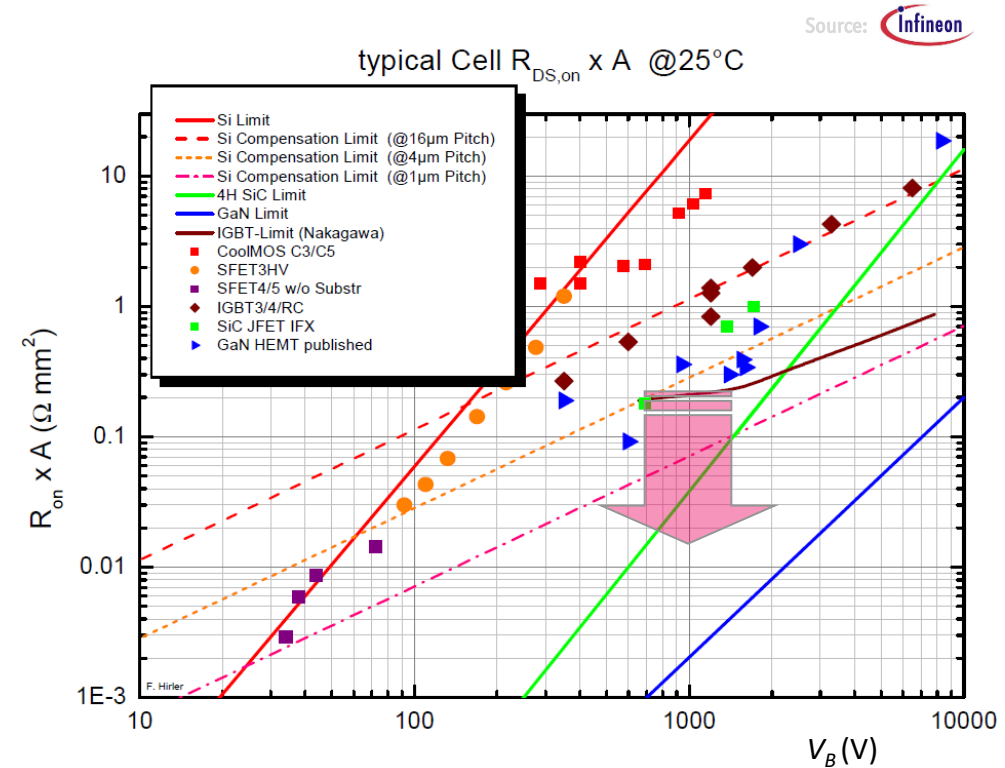
$$R_{on}^* = \frac{4V_B^2}{\epsilon\mu_n E_C^3} \leftarrow$$

$$R_{on,SiC}^* \approx \frac{1}{300} R_{on,Si}^*$$

Source:  www.evincetechtechnology.com



**Amount of semiconductor  
material needed to  
isolate 10,000V**



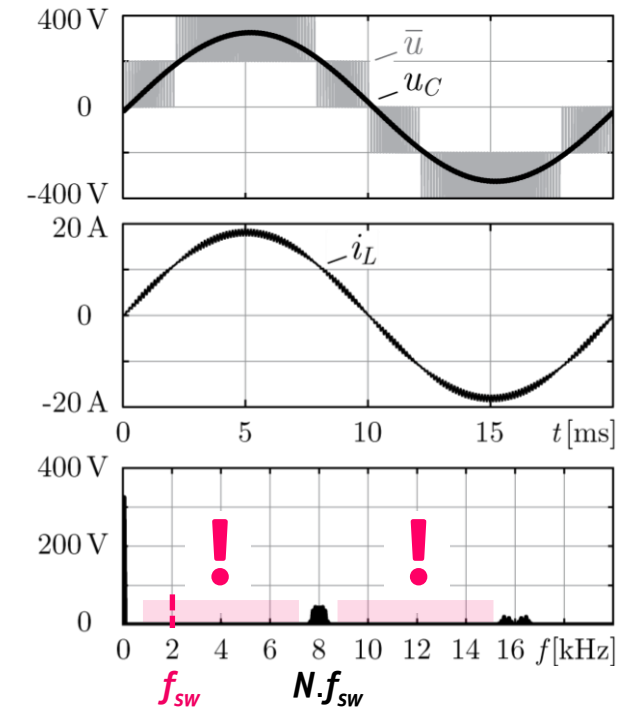
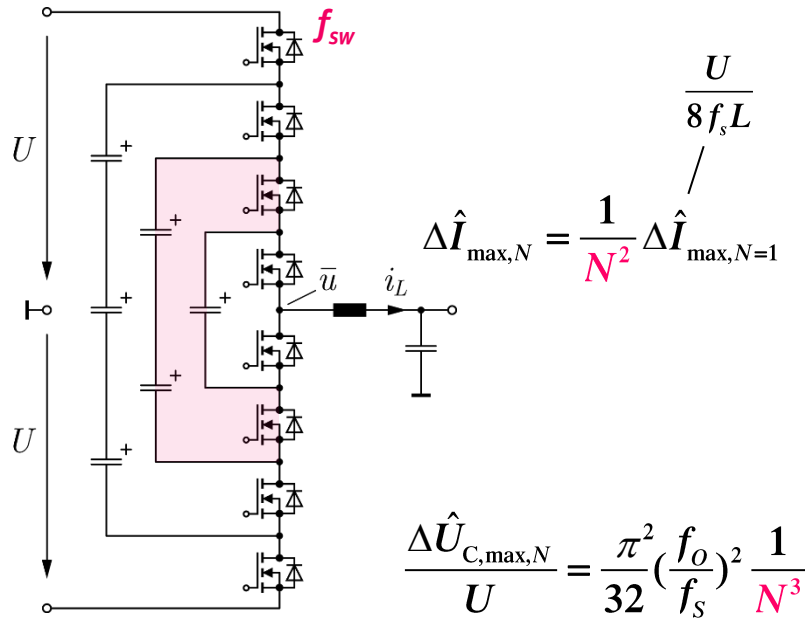
- **High Voltage Unipolar (!) Devices** → **Excellent Sw. Performance / High Power Density**

# Scaling of Multi-Cell/Level Concepts

- **Reduced Ripple @ Same (!) Switching Losses**
- **Lower Overall On-Resistance @ Given Blocking Voltage**
- **Application of LV Technology to HV**



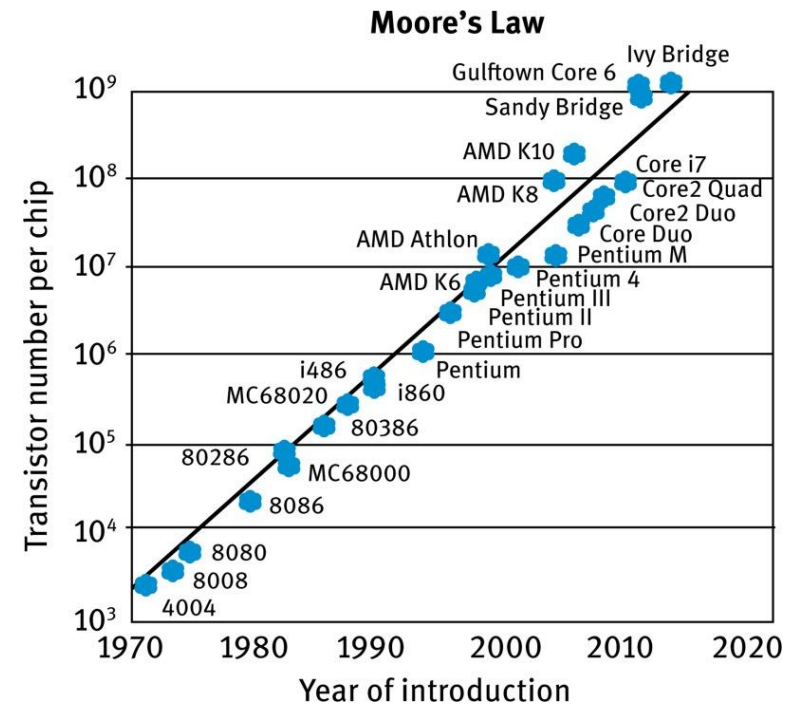
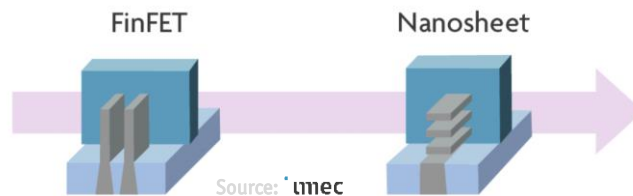
Source: R. Pilawa  
Integrated Dual-Sided  
Half-Bridge Flying  
Capacitor Converter  
Switching Cell



- **Scalability / Manufacturability / Standardization / Redundancy**

# Digital Signal / Data Processing

- *Exponentially Improving uC / Storage Technology (!)*
- *Extreme Levels of Density (nm-Nodes) / Processing Speed*
- *Continuous Relative Cost Reduction*



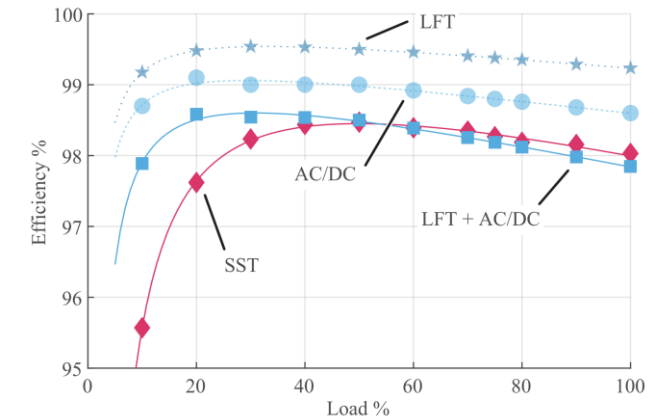
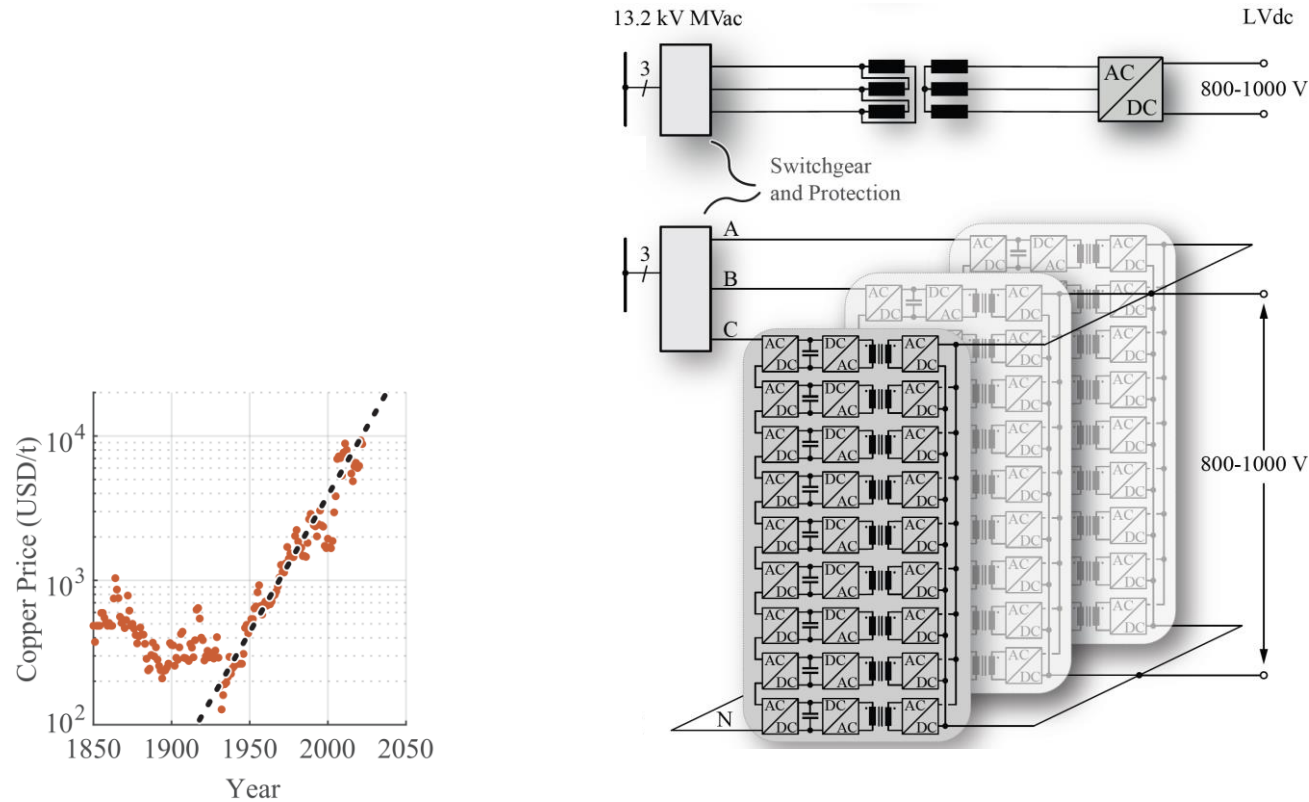
- *Fully Digital Control / Distributed Intelligence — “Complexity Management”*
- *AI-Based Design / Digital Twins / Industrial IoT (IIoT)*

*Examples of  
“Do More With Less”*

— *Solid-State Transformer* —  
*EV Power Electronics*

# Carbon Footprint of 3- $\Phi$ AC/DC SST 1/2

- 400kW Fully-Modular Solid-State-Transformer (SST) w/ HF-Isolation Stages
- Lower Raw Material Effort / Lower Impact of Increasing Raw Material Costs



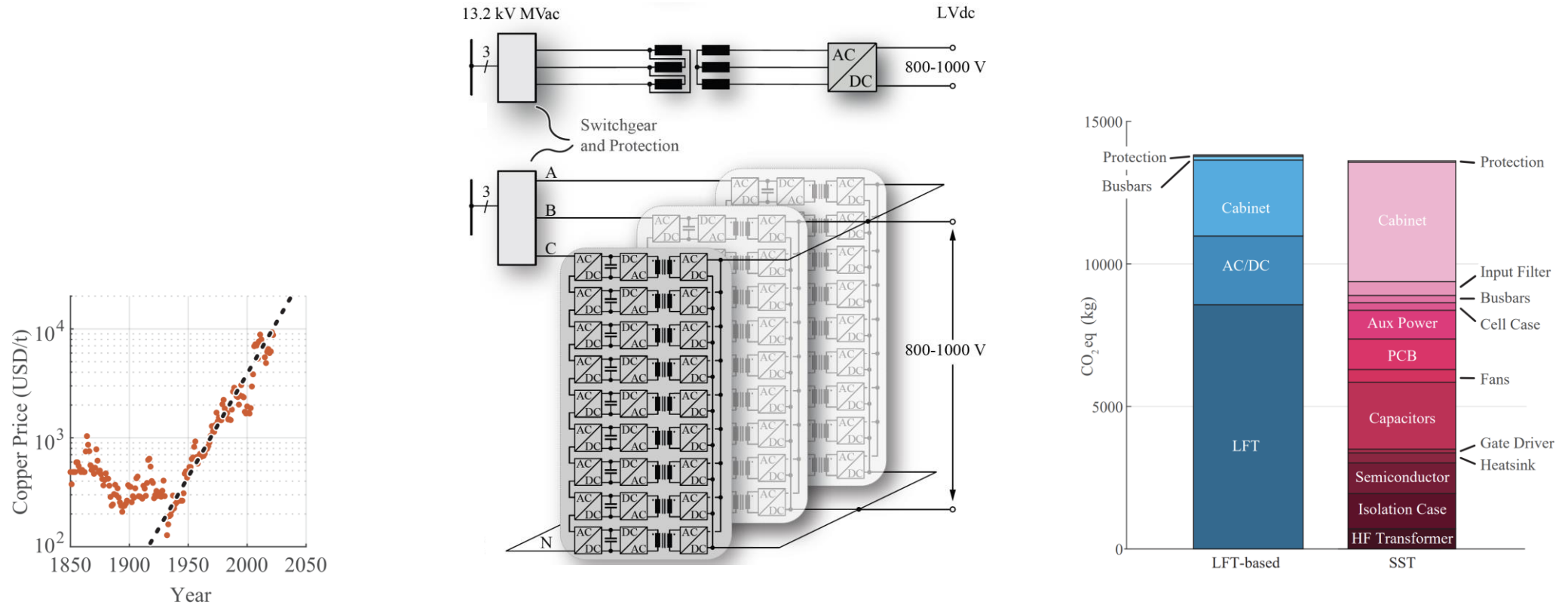
- Evaluation Against Dry-Type LFT-Based MVAC-LVDC Interface w/ Equal Full-Load Efficiency

Source: DELTA



# Carbon Footprint of 3- $\Phi$ AC/DC SST 2/2

- 400kW Fully-Modular Solid-State-Transformer (SST) w/ HF-Isolation Stages
- Lower Raw Material Effort / Lower Impact of Increasing Raw Material Costs

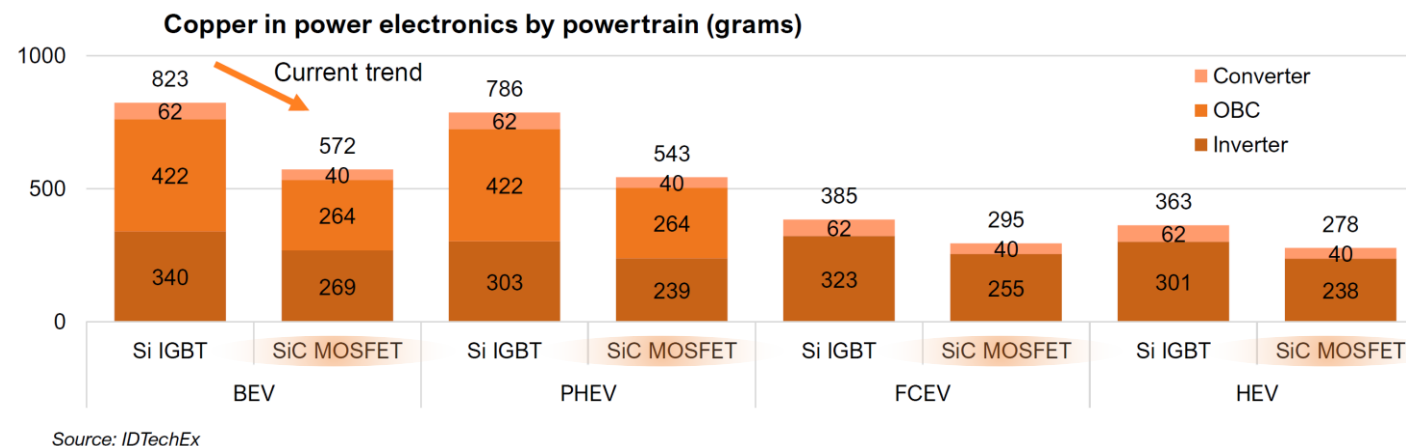


- SST- $CO_{2,eq}$  Data Shown for Early Prototype — Potential for Massive Future Improvement (!)

Source: DELTA

# Copper Used in xEVs

- *Cu Used for Traction Motors, Energy Storage, Power Electronics, HV & LV Distribution, Etc.*
- *ICE (2023) — 29.5kg | BEV Robotaxi in 2034 — 73kg (7.8kg Motor & Power Electronics)*



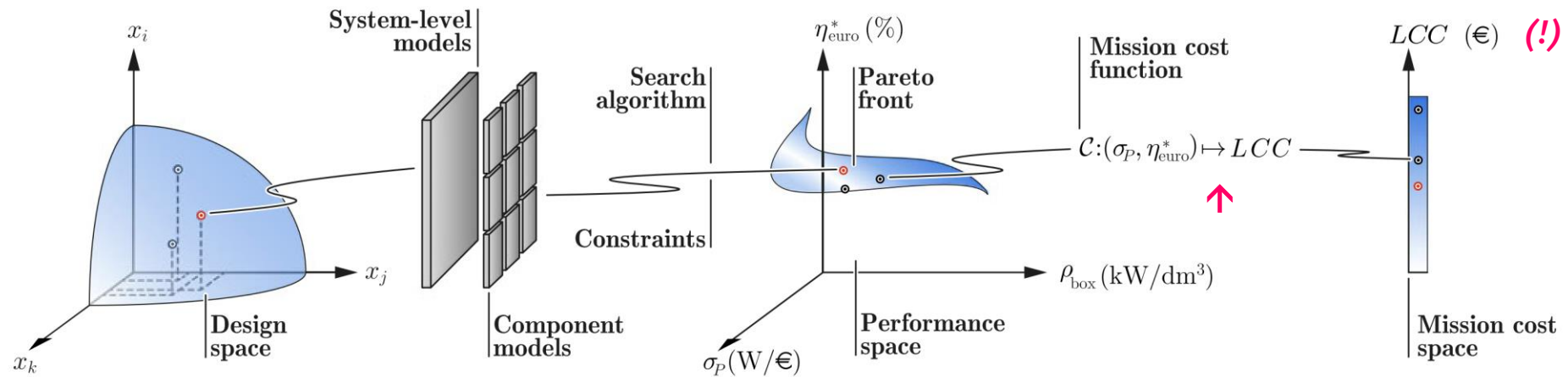
- *Transition Si IGBTs → SiC MOSFETs — 25...30% Decrease of Power Electronics Cu Intensity*

## ***Action #2*** ***Eco-Design of Power Electronics***

———— ***New Key Performance Indicators*** ————  
***Operation Phase Assessment***

# Multi-Objective Optimization

- *Typ. Performance Indices* — Efficiency  $\eta$  [%] | Power Density  $\rho$  [kW/dm<sup>3</sup>] | Rel. Cost  $\sigma$  [kW/\$]
- *Consideration of Specific Operating Points OR Mission Profile*

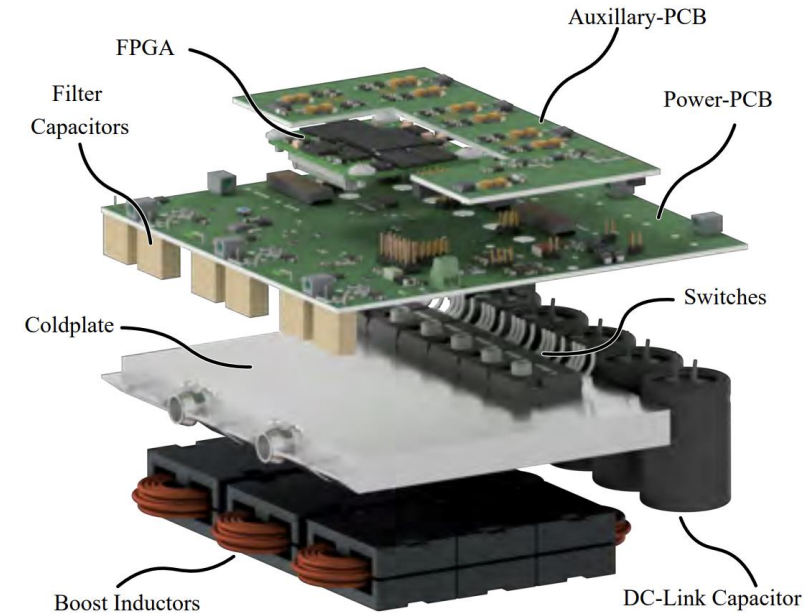
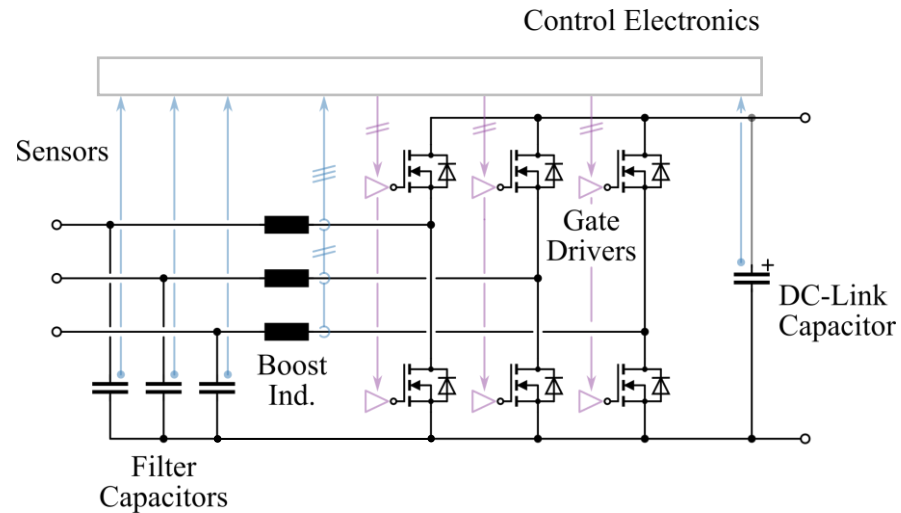


- *Mission Profile* — Power Loss  $\rightarrow$  Energy Loss / Life-Cycle Cost (!)

## Example — Three-Phase AC/DC PEBB

- **Key Power Electronics Building Block (PEBB) for Three-Phase PFC Rectifiers & Inverters**

10 kW  
400 V<sub>AC</sub> Mains  
800 V<sub>DC</sub> Output  
1200 V SiC

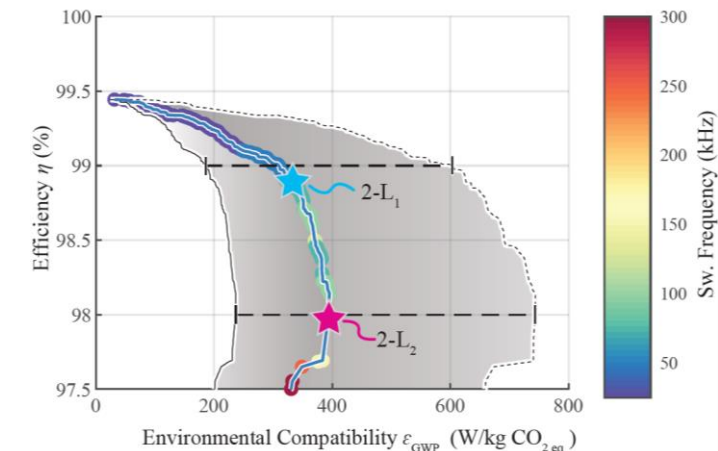
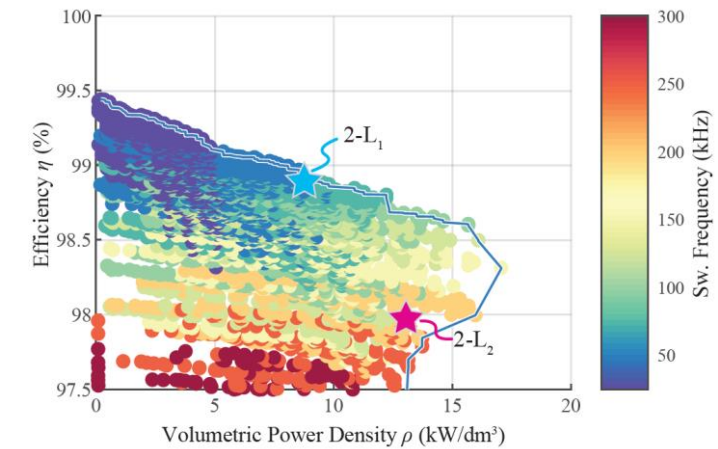
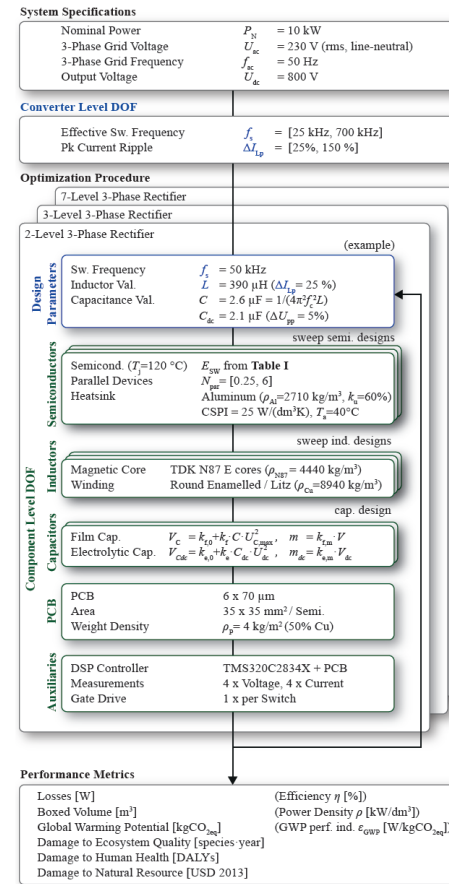
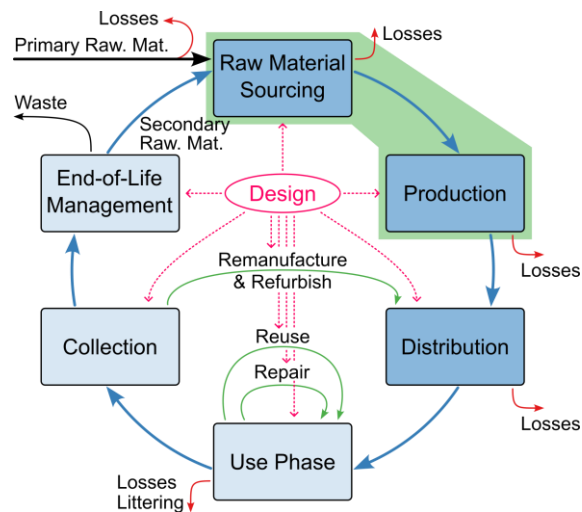


- **Main Components Considered (Losses, Volume, CO<sub>2eq</sub>)**
- **Power Trans., Heat Sink, Boost Ind., DC-Link Cap., Filter Cap., Gate Drivers, Sensors, Contr. Electr., PCBs**



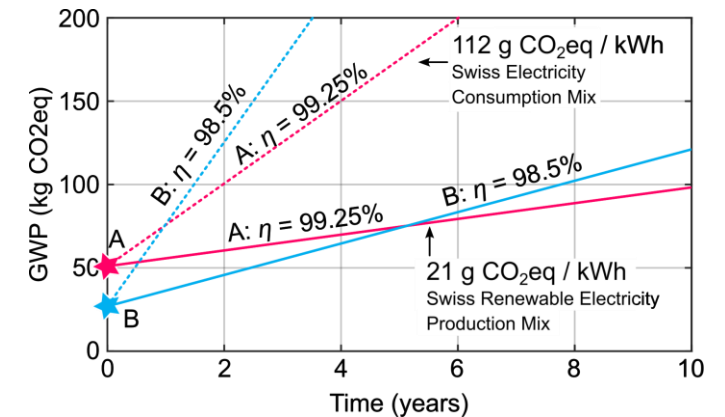
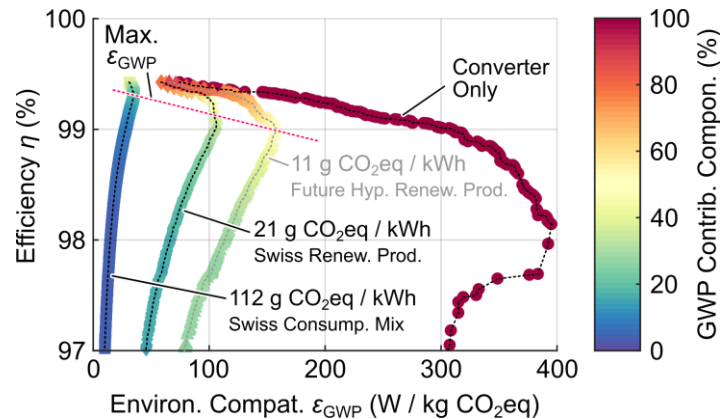
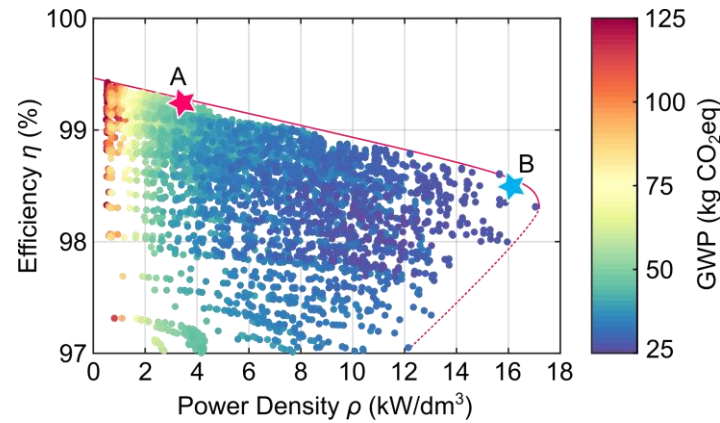
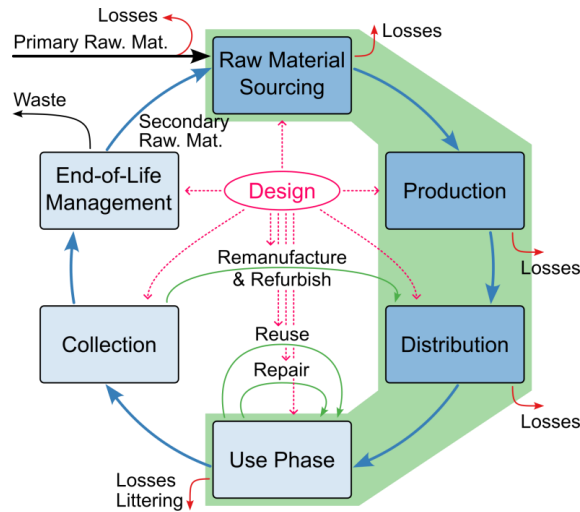
# Multi-Objective Optimization incl. Env. Impacts

- *Efficiency vs. Env. Compatibility / Carbon Footprint [W/kg CO<sub>2eq</sub>]*
- *Limited Data Availability / Quality — High Uncertainties*



# Multi-Objective Optimization incl. Use Phase

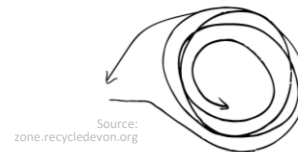
- *Design Considers Use Phase / Aims for Best Life-Cycle Performance*
- *Analogy to Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) Considerations*



- *Life-Cycle Carbon Footprint Strongly Depends on Electricity Mix & Mission Profile / Usage Intensity*

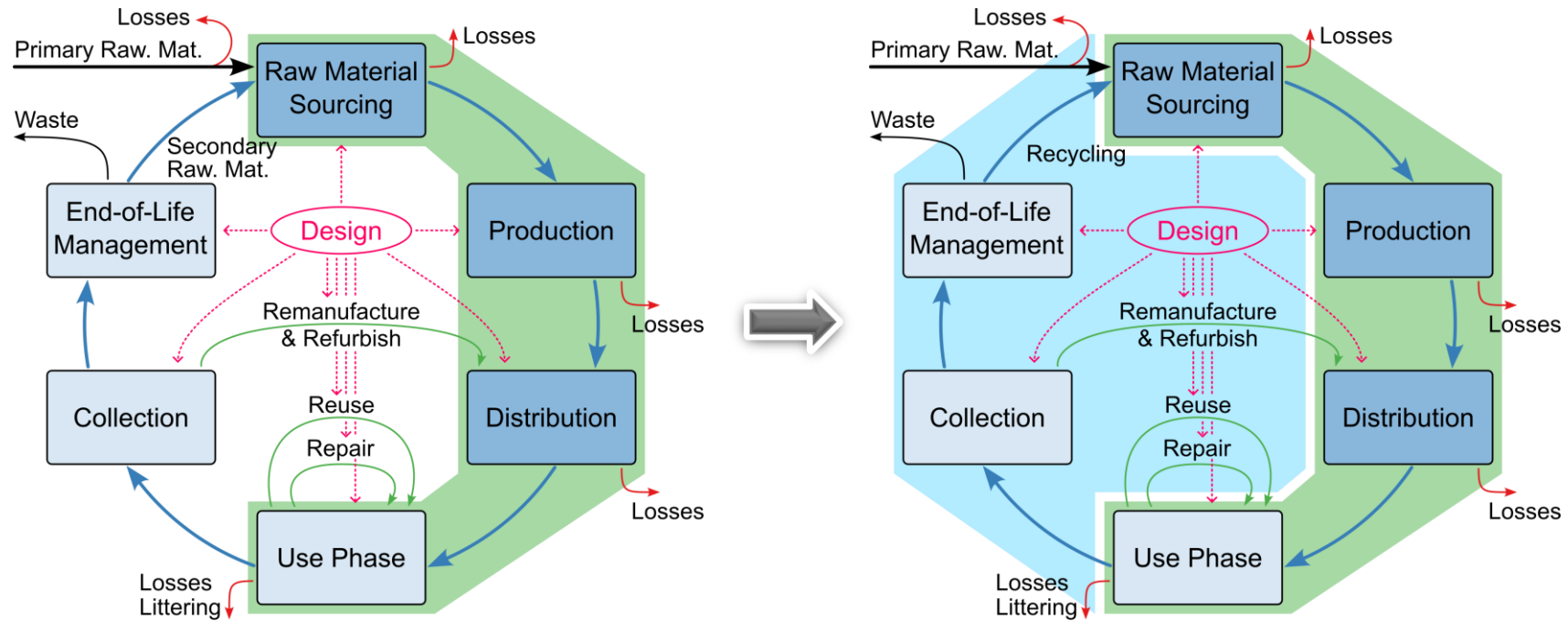
## **Action #3** **Circular Economy Compatibility**

**Integration (?)**  
**Power Electronics 5.0**



# “Closing the Loop”


- **“4R” Included Into the Design Process** — **Repair** | **Reuse** | **Refurbish** | **Recycle**
- **80% of Environmental Impact of Products Locked-In at the Design Stage**

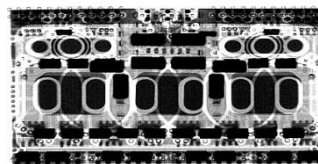
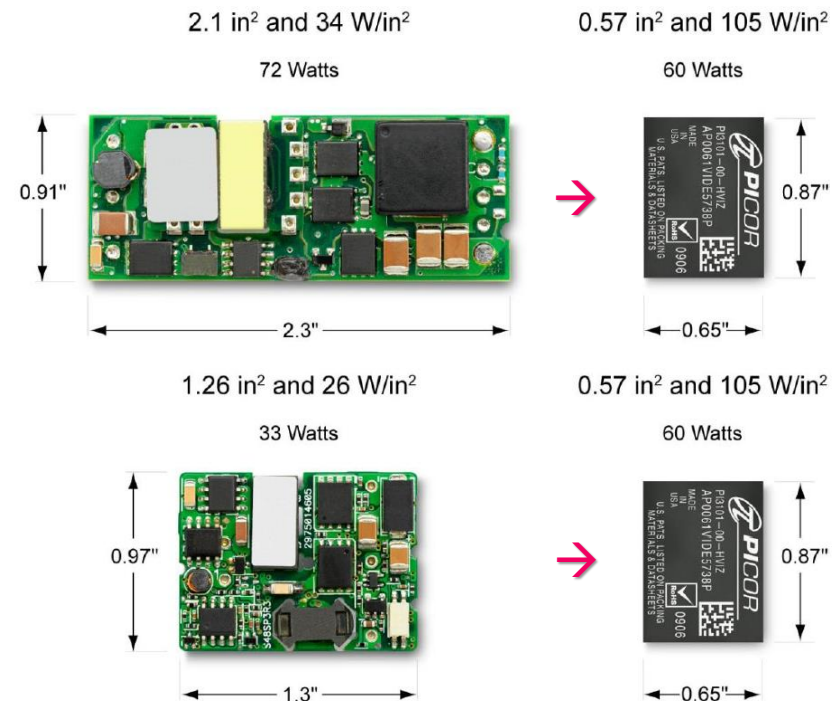


- **“Life-Cycle Cost Perspective”** — **Potentially Advantageous for Suppliers & Customers**
- **Quantification of Repairability / Reusability / etc. Still to be Clarified**

# “Integration” — The Polar Opposite of CEC (?)

- **System in Package (SiP) Approach** — *Isol. & Non-Isol. DC/DC Converters, PFC Rectifiers, etc.*
- **Minim. of Parasitic Inductances / EMI Shielding / Integr. Thermal Management**

Source: 



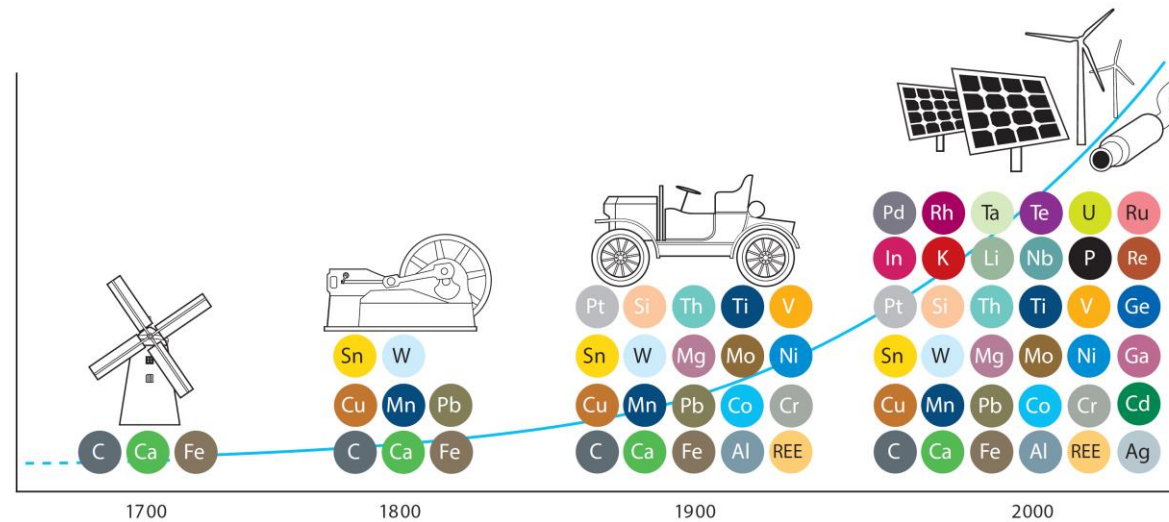
- **Extreme Power Density / Shrinks BOM**
- **Automated Manufacturing / High Reliability**
- **CEC - Circular Economy Compatibility (?)**



# The Complexity Challenge

- **Technological Innovation** — **Increasing Level of Complexity & Diversity of Modern Materials / Products**
- **Exponentially Accelerating Technological Advancement (R. Kurzweil)**

Product Complexity / „Entropy“

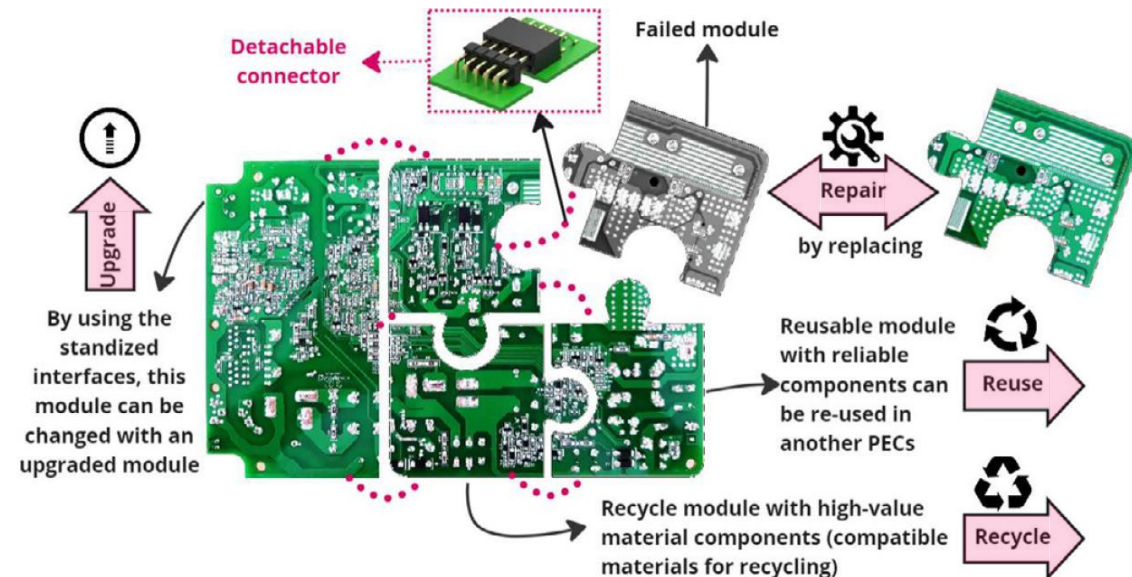


Source:  
Materials Critical  
to the Energy Industry  
An introduction

- **More than 60 Metallic Elements Involved in Pathways for Substitution of Conv. Energy Systems**
- **Ultra-Compact Systems / Functional Integration** — **Main Obstacles for EOL Material Separation (!)**

# “Modularity” — Facilitating Upgrade | Reuse | Repair

- *Modular Design Considering Ease of Disassembly | Maintainability | Upgradability | Reusability | etc.*
- *Grouping of Components Determined by Reliability Level & Expected Lifetime / Level of Reusability or Recyclability*

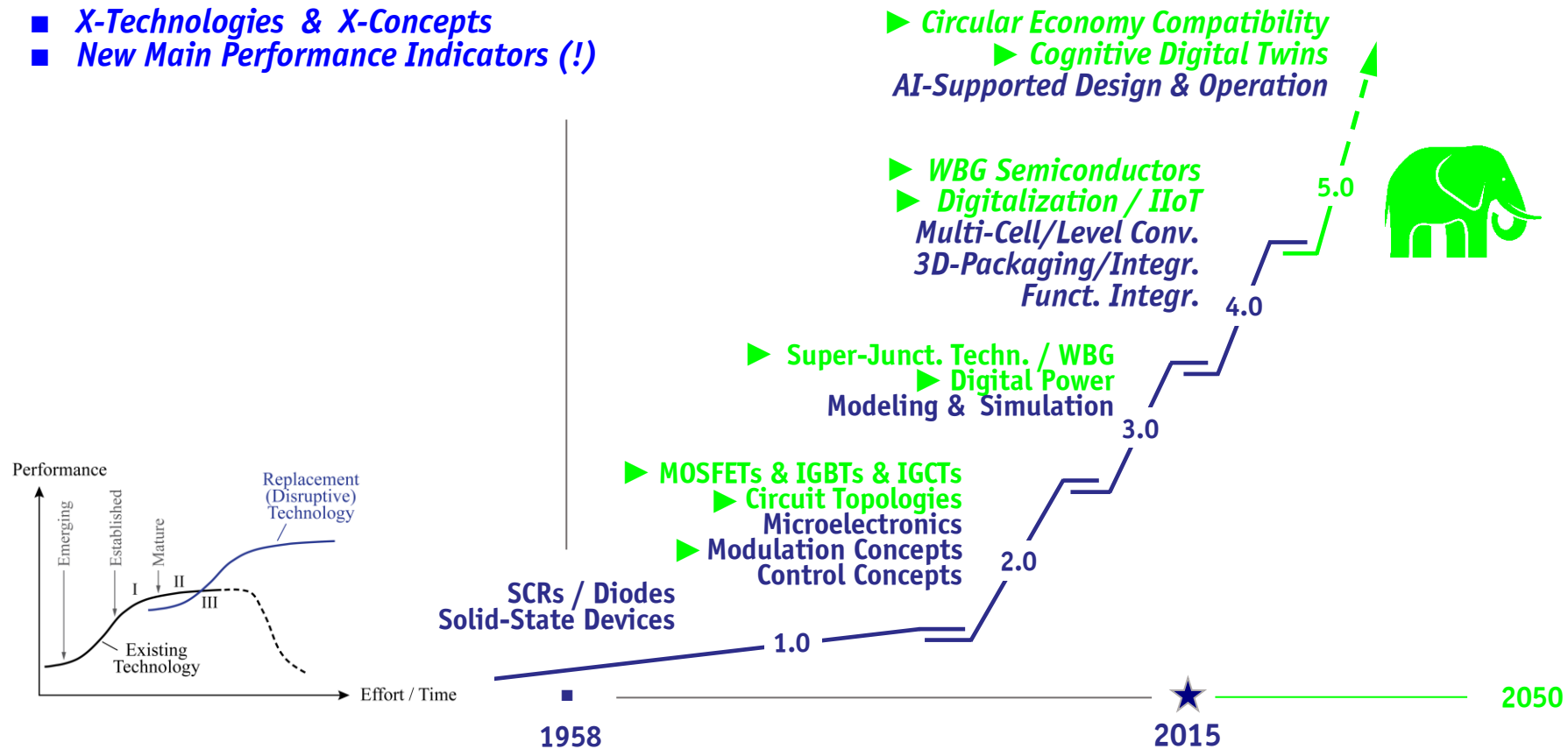


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- **FAIRPHONE** — Modular | Manually Replaceable Parts | 100% Recycl. of Sold Products | Fairtrade Materials
- *Standardized Interfaces / Mechanically Separable Connections*
- *Leveraging Economies of Scale to Compensate Interface Costs*

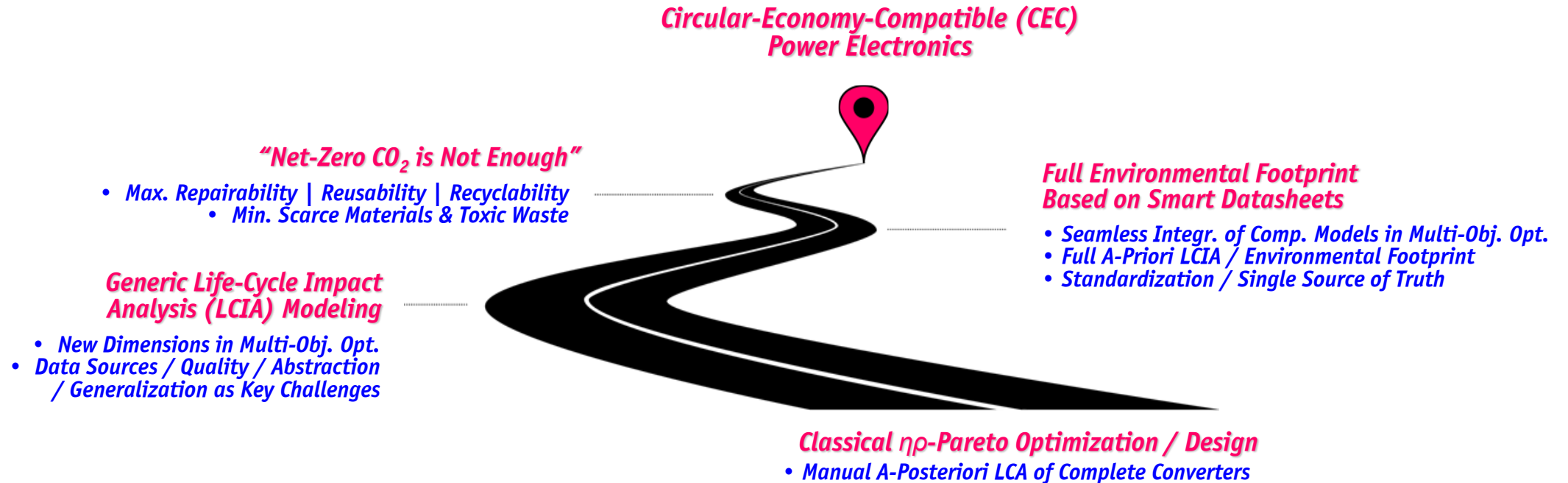
# Power Electronics 5.0

- **Power Electronics 1.0** → **Power Electronics 5.0**
- **X-Technologies & X-Concepts**
- **New Main Performance Indicators (!)**



# CEC-Power Electronics Roadmap

## ■ *Environmental Awareness as Integral Part of Future Power Electronics R&D (!)*



## ■ *Automated Design | On-Line Monitoring | Prev. Maintenance | Digital Product Passport*

**Thank you!**

