



university of  
 groningen

campus fryslân

centre for sustainable entrepreneurship

# Social enterprise and environmental sustainability: state of the art review

Folmer, E., and Rebmann, A.



Working paper series  
 2116-CSE



university of  
 groningen

campus fryslân

# Working paper series

Centre for Sustainable Entrepreneurship  
*University of Groningen/Campus Fryslân*

Visiting address:  
Wirdumerdijk 34  
8911 CE Leeuwarden  
The Netherlands

T +3158 205 5000

[www.rug.nl/cf/cse](http://www.rug.nl/cf/cse)

Editor: Niels Faber  
Academic director: Dr. Gjalt de Jong  
Design (cover): David-Imre Kanselaar

# Social enterprise and environmental sustainability: state of the art review

Folmer, E., and Rebmann, A.

**October 2021**

## Abstract

Many social enterprises are taking positive action in terms of environmental sustainability and climate change. Does the sector provide lessons for SMEs more widely? In this paper, we examine what lessons we can learn from the study of social enterprises and environmental entrepreneurship that can help SMEs and entrepreneurs more widely tackle environmental sustainability issues. We highlight how market failures that are at the root of environmental problems may offer entrepreneurial opportunities for creating sustainable businesses. We present an overview of the possibilities for sustainable business models as well as the generally recognised challenges that come with sustainable organising. We conclude this paper with identifying needs for future research as well as providing policy recommendations to encourage the integration of social and environmental goals in business.

**Keywords:** Social enterprise, sustainability, SME