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# Making Ecopreneurs

Developing Sustainable  
Entrepreneurship

Second Edition

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# Introduction

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This second edition of *Making Ecopreneurs* provides readers with a better understanding of the entrepreneurial perspective in the sustainability debate. It has been revised and updated to reflect changes in this fast-evolving field, and draws on the work of many different businesspeople, writers and researchers from around the world.

The business case for sustainable development and the greening of industry is based on many different arguments, but one area that has been frequently overlooked is the entrepreneurial perspective. The shift to more sustainable, 'green' business practices poses not only challenges, but also many potential opportunities for the business operators and firms that are prepared to be innovative, adopt different business models, take some risks, and approach this area as a viable commercial prospect rather than a threat.

This book gives readers a snapshot of the current level of understanding of this topic. It seeks to analyse and explain the behaviour and world-view of ecopreneurs, to pass on the lessons and advice that they can give other prospective business venturers, and assess the macro-level frameworks that can help or hinder green entrepreneurship.

This book is accordingly divided into three broad segments: concepts, context and conditions, and case studies.

Part One examines in some detail the conceptual models and classification frameworks used in this field of study. In the very first chapter, I attempt to provide readers with an overview of the field, by helping to define what is really meant by the term 'ecopreneur', the characteristics of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial firms, and the typical features of ecopreneurship. I then give a brief history of research work in the field to date and an agenda for future development of the area. A similar approach is taken by Bradley Parrish and Fiona Tilley, who chart the emergence of the field in greater detail. One of the early theorists in the area, Robert Isaak, then examines the different types of green entrepreneurs that exist and the micro- and macro-level policy structures which might facilitate the

growth of more green entrepreneurs in future. The next two chapters – one by Liz Walley, David Taylor and Karen Greig, and the other by Stefan Schaltegger – attempt to examine green entrepreneurship at a broad level. The authors suggest models which can be used to help define, categorize and explain the notion of ecopreneurship in a generic sense. This work will, it is hoped, help pave the way for future development of conceptual models that can be used to describe, understand and analyse the behaviour of green entrepreneurs. Anne de Bruin and Kate Lewis then delve into another frequently overlooked area – that of microbusinesses, the very smallest enterprises that actually make up the bulk of the world's new and small business ventures – and suggest a descriptive model of their behaviour in regard to sustainability and environmental performance. Finally, Lassi Linnanen provides some personal reflections on environmental entrepreneurship in Finland, based on a combination of both personal experience and research. From this background he also suggests a framework that helps explain different types of ecopreneurial activity.

In Part Two the conditions and frameworks in which ecopreneurship works are analysed in detail. In this section, we look at the factors that promote and hinder environmental entrepreneurship, as well as some of the characteristics that typify actual ecopreneurs and their firms. Astad Pastakia looks at some of the preconditions needed to foster ecopreneurship in a developing country (in this case, India) and explains how these can be analysed and assessed. This chapter will be of particular interest to regulators and policy-makers seeking to compare and promote greener, more entrepreneurial firms in different countries and regions. Next, Jürgen Freimann, Sandra Marxen and Hildegaard Schick discuss, on the basis of their own research in Germany, how new entrepreneurs who are currently in the process of creating and launching new business ventures can be encouraged to adopt a more sustainable perspective. Anastasia O'Rourke then critically analyses the role of the venture capital industry in promoting – and sometimes inhibiting – the creation and growth of green firms in developed economies. In the next chapter Elya Tagar and Chris Cocklin look at the effectiveness of networking and the development of industry clusters as a tool to promote sustainability. David Holloway then examines the importance of internal decision-making processes within the firm as a tool to promote ecopreneurship. Finally, Holger Petersen reports on a survey into strategic marketing tools and competitive strategies used by entrepreneurial green firms in Germany, Switzerland and Austria.

Part Three of the book concludes with a number of case studies that highlight environmental entrepreneurship in action. These have been drawn from a wide

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variety of different countries and business models, and help show just how varied green entrepreneurship can be. The first chapter, by Jim MacBeth and Yamini Narayanan, examines a small Australian outback tourism venture. The next two cases, one by Gabrielle Kruks-Wisner and the other by Margaret J. Naumes and Jill A. Kammermeyer, look at ecopreneurship in the non-profit sector. Both of these cases show how social entrepreneurs can establish and grow sustainable conservation projects that deliver environmental, social and financial returns for local communities. Finally, a North American firm focusing on energy and carbon offsets is examined by Bradley Parrish, and Kumba Jallow looks at the creation of a recycling micro-business venture in the United Kingdom.

As this collection shows, ecopreneurship is an exciting area to be involved in. At its best, entrepreneurship is about harnessing the enthusiasm, initiative and creative energy of individuals. When this dynamism is applied to developing business solutions that help move enterprise into more sustainable pathways, then the results have the potential to be truly fascinating – and rewarding. I hope you enjoy reading this book.

Finally, a brief note of thanks. The preparation of any book also relies on many other people apart from the editor and individual contributors. During the preparation of both this and the first edition of *Making Ecopreneurs*, I have been grateful for the practical help provided by Walter Wehrmeyer (editor of the journal *Greener Management International*, who originally commissioned a special edition on this topic, out of which the current book has grown), Rene van Berkel (United Nations Industrial Development Organization), Joel Mendelson (Coastal Business Centre, Western Australia) and my research assistants, Rhoda Kiptanui and Anne Croft, for their help in this project.