



**Social Enterprise** is an alternative business model where organisations combine financial sustainability with social and environmental missions, *or multiple bottom lines*.

A social enterprise is an organisation that:

- Has an explicit social aim which is clearly expressed in its governing documentation, or mission statement
- Obtains a percentage of its annual income from the sale of goods or services, including the fulfilment of service level agreements, or clearly identifies this as a priority business objective
- Limits its profit distribution to activities that support its social aims, either through re-investment in the business, funding of external programmes or profit sharing among co-operatives members

Social enterprise is for anyone who wants to start a business and **considers social and environmental impact as core objectives**. Whereas the private sector is held accountable for increasing economic return for shareholders, and the voluntary sector is charged with increasing public benefit, social enterprise is a business model that aims to deliver across a range of economic, social and environmental outputs.

Social enterprise has great potential in the following areas:

- Ensuring financial sustainability for the voluntary and community sector by identifying opportunities for earned income
- Increasing first time employment opportunities for those on the margins of the labour market (long term un-employed and those with physical, learning, or mental health disabilities)
- As a model for public service delivery, both as a way to engage in the externalisation of local authority services and to develop local suppliers
- Assisting entrepreneurs to bring social and environmentally produced goods and services to niche markets and solutions where there is market failure
- Achieving corporate social responsibility goals for the private sector
- Creating new models of employee ownership and participation in the private sector