



**Call for:
MASTER THESIS**

Impact: Help or Hindrance in the New Venture Creation Process?

Topic Description:

Startups and Entrepreneurship in general have long been lauded as driving forces of innovations that will push society forwards and respond to upcoming problems that incumbent firms are too inflexible to respond to. This has led policy makers to establish support structures and programs that explicitly aim to push founders inside their Entrepreneurial Ecosystem to start ventures addressing pressing issues. However, the founders aiming to address social or environmental issues and achieve beneficial impact with their venture tend to possess character traits that run counter to the classic capitalist idea of revenue maximization, opting to prioritize their impact over the financial side of their venture.

While entrepreneurship research has started to focus on these hybrid or sustainable firms in recent years, the question is whether policy makers have realized the different priorities the founders and firms attracted to these topics possess, and organized help accordingly. In short: Do these startups actually get the help and support they need during venture creation, or do they face expectations that they can or do not want to fulfill?

This masters project will investigate this question via interviews with impact- and non-impact-focused startups that have emerged or failed in BW in recent years. To gain new insights, perceptions of founders pursuing different approaches will be compared and contrasted, to find out if these ventures face additional and unforeseen hurdles in founding their businesses, and how they evaluate the top-down help provided by new policies in the Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in BW.

Goals & Expected Contributions:

1. Gain insights into how the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem is responding to impactful firms and their different needs compared to more classical venture designs
2. Analyze different founder perspectives on their reasoning for and practice of pursuing non-economic goals
3. Synthesize broader concepts on how founders and ecosystems adapt to new venture designs and the support they may need during the new venture creation process

Initial Readings:

- Abootorabi, H., Shankar, R.K., Rasmussen, E., & Wiklund, J. (2024). Do Hybrid Goals Pay off? Social and Economic Goals in Academic Spin-Offs. *Journal of Management Studies*, 61. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12967>
- Stam, E., & van de Ven, A. (2021). Entrepreneurial ecosystem elements. *Small Business Economics* 65. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-019-00270-6>
- Di Vaio, A., Hassan, R., Chhabra, M., Arrigo, E., & Palladino, R. (2022). Sustainable entrepreneurship impact and entrepreneurial venture life cycle: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 378. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2022.134469>



Your Profile:

You can apply for this thesis call if you (are)...

- highly motivated to work in a structured way.
- interested in the topic.
- familiar with or eager to learn about qualitative interviews and research methods.
- creative and interested in learning new things, topics, and methods.
- enrolled in either MSc BWL / MSc BWL t.o. / MSc TechMan / MA EPSF program.
- have previously completed at least one course offered at ENI (or plan to do so during your thesis semester).

How to Apply:

Application deadline: **30.04.2025**.

To apply, please prepare a max. 2-page exposé summarizing your proposed approach to the topic and a proposed preliminary overview of contents. Please also indicate if you have already completed a course at ENI and don't forget to add your contact details. You may submit your exposé via our website: <https://www.eni.uni-stuttgart.de/en/teaching/Courses/Bachelor-and-Masterthesis/>

If you have questions about this call, please reach out to johannes.engels@eni.uni-stuttgart.de

We are looking forward to working with you!