

On The Evolution Of “Cleaner Production” As A Concept And A Practice

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Abstract

Cleaner Production“(CP) is about less and more efficient energy and materials use and the substitution of more harmful products (for the environment and health) by less dangerous ones. CP was the reply of the industry to the call for sustainable development as launched by the WCED (1987) and further elaborated in Rio's Agenda 21 (UN, 1992). During the past 25 years, the concept was put in practice. During this period it changed in scope, methods, and application area. This provided a deeper socio-economic impact to an idea that was originally launched to awaken industry on its environmental responsibilities. This paper provides a review of essentials that contributed to the fundamental changes in CP during the most recent quarter of a century. It takes off with a review of CP definitions illustrating the changes of the content. Changes in scope are exemplified with the increasing importance of “Corporate Social Responsibility” (CSR). This includes that post-modern companies have not only responsibilities on their economic performance and the environment, but should also act on issues including human rights and resources, business ethics, and community involvement. The links between CP and green and circular economy are indicated. The CP approach is increasingly applied outside the industry. CP for sustainable tourism is discussed in more detail but is only an example of the wider application in e.g. agriculture or health services.

Keywords

Cleaner Production; Corporate Social Responsibility; Renewable Energy; Smart City; Sustainable Tourism.