



“TEN YEARS WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE”

The Widening Concept of “Cleaner Production”

HENS L. ^{a*}, CABELLO-ERAS J.J. ^{b,c}, GARCIA-LORENZO D. ^c, CHAMORO C. ^b,
HAESLONCKX D. ^d, VANDECASTEELE C. ^d

a. Vlaamse Instelling voor Technologisch Onderzoek (VITO), Mol, Belgium

b. Universidad de la Costa (CUC), Baranquilla, Colombia

c. Universidad de Cienfuegos (UCF), Cuba

d. Leuven University (KUL), Leuven, Belgium

**Corresponding author, luchens51@gmail.com*

Abstract

“Cleaner production” (CP) emerged in the aftermath of the 1987 Brundtland Commission (WCED, 1987) and calls for less and more efficient energy and materials use and the substitution of more harmful products (for the environment and health) by less dangerous ones. Cleaner production was the reply of industry to the inter-sectorial and socio-economic call for sustainable development. The technical aims widened. Originally they were targeted to improve environmentally inferior products to less inferior ones. Today the goal is producing quality products using renewable energy efficiently and producing zero waste, while emitting no pollution.

The perspective of the scope also changed from environmental sustainability to the wider “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. This widening of contents necessitates more and better adapted methods. During the past 45 years the number of assessment methods (preventing pollution and its effects) increased significantly from environmental aspects (EIA), over health (HIA) and policy aspects (SEA), to sustainability assessment, addressing not only environmental, but in an integrated way also social, economic, and ethical issues of the evaluation.

This paper reviews this evolution of ideas. It provides not only the concepts, but is equally based on examples illustrating different aspects of this evolution. It acts as a guide towards contemporary CSR and advocates its support towards education and research.

Keywords: *Cleaner production, corporate social responsibility, renewable energy.*