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DRIVERS OF ECO-INNOVATION IN CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Eco-innovation is defined as any form of innovation aiming at significant and demonstrable progress towards the goal of sustainable development, through reducing impacts on the environment or achieving a more efficient and responsible use of natural resources, including energy. The chemical industry is usually considered one of the most polluting industries. Ensuring safe production, transport and handling of its products, with care for the environment and in full accordance with regulations, is of key importance for the image and reputation of today's chemical industry. Most chemical companies have been developing and introducing eco-innovations in an attempt to change this negative image. Using a sample of 544 companies in the Spanish chemical industry, we study the factors that have driven these companies to move towards this type of innovation activities. Our empirical research shows that intra-group sources of innovations, together with clients and industry associations are the main driving forces of eco-innovation in the chemical industry. Furthermore our model establishes that innovations in products, services, manufacturing methods and logistical systems are positively related to the achievement of environmental objectives.

Key words: chemical industry, eco-innovation, innovation drivers, sources of innovation

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