

# What makes Green Productivity So Attractive?

We need to shift from "mandate, regulate and litigate" to "smart growth" and unleash the collective creative ingenuity of mankind. Innovating sustainability is key.

Previous approaches to environmental protection have tended to ignore economic performance. Regulators were tasked with the dubious honour of having to closely monitor those with the deepest pockets and most suspect of the greatest 'wrongdoing' - sparked by the events such as Chernobyl, Bhopal and the Exxon Valdez. This surveillance has led to substantial reductions in single point source pollution in most countries. However it has left the seemingly trivial individual contribution of day-to-day inefficiencies in other larger and smaller enterprises and public organizations unattended.

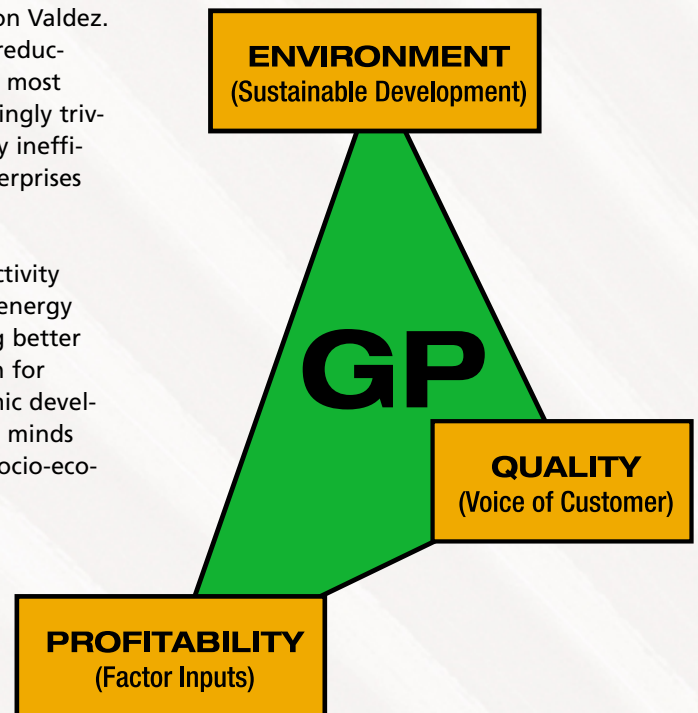
Essentially the practice of Green Productivity results in using material resources and energy more efficiently and sustainably - doing better with less. We know spurring innovation for products and services enhances economic development, therefore greening innovative minds enables development with less risk of socio-economic and environmental degradation.

According to the World Economic Forum's Year 2000 Report, the ability of a nation to improve its competitiveness is measured by its environmental performance in addition to more traditional economic criteria. Central to improved competitiveness is productivity. This makes the concept of Green Productivity a simple but elegant solution - to make environmental protection a core business attractor instead of an isolated cost contributor.

The recognition that environment and development are two sides of the same coin came in response to the need to link economic development strategies with environmental preservation. Between 1993 and 1994 a number of the APO member economies were involved in research focused on applications and opportunities for cleaner production as the cornerstone for guiding Asian countries towards a more environmentally friendly industrialization.

While the tools, techniques and methods have expanded over the last eight years, the goal has remained the same - to balance environmental and economic needs. In doing so we improve the quality of life for society as a whole. This

balance is achieved by keeping a focus on Quality (representing the voice of the customer), Profitability (determined by how well you do with what you have - factor inputs) and the Environment (our natural capital).



Between 1996 and 1998 our efforts were focused on mainly in the smaller enterprises in the electroplating, textile, food processing and papermaking sectors. As such, there was a very strong emphasis on the manufacturing process in the methodology used. Subsequently, the application of Green Productivity extended to farms and also to solving problems of village communities. The methodology had to be modified and made more general so that it can be applied to other areas related to productivity and environment.

Between 1994 and 2000, over 1,000 people involved in specific projects have shown the success of Green Productivity. With the start of the new century, we see a growing enthusiasm for the power of Green Productivity as a strategic driver for innovation. In this new Millennium, Green Productivity will help Asia and we hope others to innovate a sustainable future.