



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM  
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# Corporate responsibility, sustainability & markets

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Abstract

The terms CSR, 'sustainability', 'sustainable development' and 'corporate sustainability' are critical terms for developing, analysing and evaluating public and private policy goals. The terms are used in decision-making concerning investments in many types of activities including policy development, strategy creation and implementation via resource allocation. These terms emerged in different fields of endeavour at different points in time. Accordingly, it is only to be expected that they do not coalesce in terms of meaning; however, in the intervening years, they have come to be used interchangeably mixing up policy agendas, confusing managers, regulators and activists and the public at large. We argue that CSR is the only business focused term that includes at a fundamental law social and ethical dimensions. The other terms are important, but should be distinguished and used carefully to help parties achieve their goals.

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