

A Review on Upcycling: Current Body of Literature, Knowledge Gaps and a Way Forward

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Abstract : Upcycling is a process in which used materials are converted into something of higher value and/or quality in their second life. It has been increasingly recognised as one promising means to reduce material and energy use and also to engender sustainable production and consumption. For this reason and other foreseeable benefits, the concept of upcycling has received more attention from numerous researchers and business practitioners in recent years. This has been seen in the growing number of publications on this topic since the 1990s. However, the overall volume of literature dealing with upcycling is still low and no major review has been presented. Therefore, in order to further establish this field, this paper analyses and summarises the current body of literature on upcycling, focusing on different definitions, trends in practices, benefits, drawbacks and barriers in a number of subject areas and gives suggestions for future research by illuminating knowledge gaps in the area of upcycling.

Keywords : circular economy, cradle to cradle, sustainable production and consumption, upcycling, waste management

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