Letter from the Editor

Chemical Parks – Forthcoming challenges

The chemical industry is characterized by one specific phenomenon that no other industry pursues in such an efficient way, i.e. the organization of several companies within joint locations – the so called ‘chemical parks’. One main factor explaining the unique efficiency and competitiveness of such chemical parks is the occurrence of synergies effects, e.g. ensured by site operators providing an appropriate infrastructure, supplying energy and water, and being responsible for care and security aspects. Nevertheless, especially European chemical parks may be confronted with serious challenges in the forthcoming years. For instance, emerging chemical parks in Asia may outperform the historically grown European chemical parks as the latter ones often lack a comparably tailor-made construction design and therefore cannot provide for the same efficiency. Consequently, operators of European chemical parks need to be prepared and continuously develop new ways of increasing their competitiveness.

Thus, we are pleased to welcome Gunter Festel and Martin Würmseher who present detailed insights into the challenges and strategies for chemistry parks in Europe. In their commentary, the authors outline an overview of the current situation and future development of chemical parks in Europe. Here, they specifically refer to success factors, strategic positioning, restructuring, consolidation and subsequent performance improvement. Regarding the latter one Gunter Festel and Martin Würmseher provides you with examples illustrating cost saving potentials by means of optimizing the supply of electricity, steam and water.

Additionally, Christoph Behrendt also refers to the present topic of chemical parks. In his article “How to secure sustainable competitiveness of Chemical Industry Parks: Global competitive challenges and a systematic, customer-centric response”, the author addresses the highly relevant question of how operators of chemical parks should consider external investors’ perspective into their strategic decision making. Thus, the author illustrates insights from an international competitiveness study of leading chemical parks and, in so doing, provide a guideline of how operators of chemical parks may implement a customer-oriented focus in their business model and stay competitive on a global scale.

In their article “Are you still comparing or already learning? Experience report of a Facility Management benchmarking for laboratory buildings”, Jörg Petri and Andreas Kühne highlight the advantages of identifying the most efficient concepts of designing and operating laboratory and office buildings by applying benchmarking studies (based on selected key figures). Exchanging and learning about the conditions and causes of deviations across participants during Best Practice Workshops are central in order to develop guidelines, i.e. Good Operating Practices, to improve processes in consideration of firm-specific characteristics and enhance their performance.

The research paper of this issue “Inter-industry innovations in terms of electric mobility: Should firms take a look outside their industry?” written by Stephan von Delft aims to make companies aware of the increasing necessity to collaborate with (new) actors showing additional knowledge and capabilities in order to generate and capture value in new configured value chains, for instance deriving within convergence processes. Technological challenges, changing industry structures, the formation of alliances and business model innovations are topics that are not only arising in the field of electric mobility as the anticipation and response to changes within firms’ environments are crucial for all businesses.

Now, please enjoy reading the second issue of the tenth volume of the Journal of Business Chemistry. We would like to thank all authors and reviewers who have contributed to this new issue. If you have any comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to send us an email to:

contact@businesschemistry.org

Carsten Gelhard, Executive Editor
(cg@businesschemistry.org)

Birte Golembiewski, Executive Editor
(bg@businesschemistry.org)