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Sustainability – a multidimensional challenge in the nuclear industry

Sustainability in nuclear power is linked to many sustainability aspects, and these sustainability aspects have different significance in the different phases of nuclear power.

For example, during the front-end particular focus and attention is given to consideration of certain aspects (e.g. human rights, biodiversity, health & safety (H&S), etc.); whereas during operation other aspects are central (e.g. nuclear safety, stakeholder involvement, radiation protection, etc); and the emphasis shifts again during back-end to another set of aspects (long-term radiation safety, environment, H&S, etc.).

For these different phases, different sets of actors also have the main responsibility and different groups of stakeholders have particular requirements and expectations.

This means that the sustainability work for a responsible “utility” is multidimensional. It is important in every part of the life cycle and across the business to focus on the right issues, collaborate with relevant actors and identify the right measures and tools at the right time. It is also essential that decision-making at any particular stage is supported by awareness of the sustainability implications at all phases. This requires development of an integrated framework, with appropriate skills, tools and methods to support data gathering, analysis and decision-making throughout.

This paper will describe Vattenfall’s efforts to further develop a multidimensional sustainability framework for its nuclear activities.

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