

Product stewardship for uranium: A way for the industry to demonstrate its high performance

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The future of nuclear energy and the nuclear fuel cycle are inextricably linked and the performance of any sector has an immediate and direct effect on all other sectors. With the exception of major incidents such as Chernobyl and Fukushima, uranium mining has historically been regarded as the “bad boy” of the nuclear fuel cycle and this has been one of the impediments to the green credentials which are inherent in nuclear power. The reality is that the health, safety, environment and social credentials of uranium mining are class leading and reflect a mature industry with a strong licence to operate. Major producers, such as Rio Tinto, recognise that this performance is essential for both current and future operations. Product stewardship is a tool to help demonstrate this performance across the industry and extend this through the rest of the fuel cycle. Uranium is unique in product stewardship terms with effectively one end user for all the production combined with strong tracking and control throughout its cycle. These unique aspects give extra importance to how the industry interacts internally and externally to provide a strong base for its customers. Product stewardship of uranium is essential for the continued development of uranium as a source of minimal environmental impact, low emissions and clean energy.

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