

## Making sustainability tangible – the sustainability report of VA TECH

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For the Technology and Service Company VA TECH it is a tradition to engage in the principles of sustainability. The original impulse resulted from dealing with the subject services of our product range in plant building and quickly established in the global Group strategy dealing with the primary stakeholder groups. The strong dynamics in the Group development prove to be essentially strengthening this development process.

The profound structural process of transformation in the VA TECH Group, which commenced in 2001, established the basis for the project “CHANCE“ in which potentials were evaluated in a world-wide survey carried out among employees, and wishes and targets were substantiated. Based on the results VA TECH started a mission process in a workshop with more than 400 managers from 34 countries at the beginning of 2002 which not only established the idea of sustainability in the mission, but also in the company slogan “sustainable solutions. for a better life.“ resulting from it.

The following criteria of success clearly decide on the successful and target-oriented implementation:

- A mission is not to be seen as a rigid and inflexible structure.
- It reflects a process of change.
- Every mission is only as good as its acceptance and realisation by the employees.

Supported by the clear acceptance of the principles of sustainable development by the

VA TECH Managing Board and the intense commitment of the employees, a first reporting 2001 served for illustrating the ACTUAL situation and as impulse for the establishing process of a sustainable Group development for all concerned stakeholder groups. The following challenges arose from this initial survey:

- Decentralised Group structure (more than 150 companies)
- Establishing a standardised reporting with financial, environmental and social key figures
- Creating the structural framework conditions
- Formulating the basic policies
- Benchmarks: varying interpretation of sustainability and its reporting

In order to promote the idea of sustainability and integrate it in existing management systems an interdisciplinary Sustainability Board composed of employees from different Group Divisions was established as promoter group with the following tasks:

- To enhance Group activities aimed at achieving sustainable development
- As an advisory body to the Managing Board
- Consisting of all Divisions: quality/environmental/safety, strategy, personnel, organisational development, communications
- Formulating the reporting standards
- Supported by external experts depending on the task

The mission process that was started in 2002 as “Group Workshop” was continued 2003 by the presentation of initial concrete results. 33 Group locations presented their solutions and measures for a sustainable implementation of the VA TECH mission. The results clearly showed the internationally varying views and needs relating to a sustainable development which have to be integrated in a consistent target system.

The following general framework accompanies the VA TECH sustainability process:

- The firm embodiment of the policy statement of sustainable development among the executive staff of VA TECH (top-down process)
- A clearly defined mission under the motto “sustainable solutions. for a better life.“ developed by the company within the scope of a wide-ranging mission process
- The phased formulation of goals for the overall company, the individual divisions and the locations
- The establishment of a body for the sustainability process – the Sustainability Board
- an internal bottom-up process for the build up of sustainability aspects on the part of the employees and customers
- A powerful internal and external communications strategy with regard to sustainability

A reporting is issued yearly in connection with the Annual Report and gives information about the status of the activities and developments. Due to the high degree of relevance and the dynamics, publication on a yearly basis was chosen. The following objective targets were considered for the reporting 2002 at hand:

- Logic connection of the Annual and Sustainability Reports
- Report as communication tool towards stakeholders
- Illustration of the corporate development process
- Sustainability Report 2002 based upon the guideline of the Global Reporting Initiative
- Demonstration of the technical competence (sustainable solutions)

(Report on Sustainable Development of VA TECH enclosed; the report can be downloaded from [www.vatech.at](http://www.vatech.at))