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Skanska supports the World Commission on Dams' recommendations for long-term sustainable hydropower projects

Skanska intends to apply the guidelines for major hydropower projects recommended by the World Commission on Dams in their final report that was released today.

The World Commission on Dams was initiated by the World Bank and IUCN, the World Conservation Union. The Commission has worked for the past two years under the chairmanship of Kader Asmal, Education Minister of South Africa and winner of the Stockholm Water Prize, to finalize recommendations regarding how large hydropower projects should be carried out in a long-term, sustainable manner.

In its final report, the Commission asserts that the development, approval and construction of large hydropower projects must be permeated by openness and transparency. All affected parties must be provided an opportunity to voice an opinion in all phases of the processes. Social as well as environmental and economical aspects must be considered.

"We find the Commission's work to be extremely valuable," says Axel Wenblad, Vice President of Environmental Affairs of the Skanska Group. "It represents a major stride for sustainable development, with open and transparent processes in which all affected parties can participate, particularly those groups that are affected directly. Our hope is that the Commission's work can serve as a model for dealing with other types of controversial infrastructural projects.

"At Skanska, we hope that the Commission's new criteria and guidelines become accepted globally and we are prepared to actively strive toward these being accepted among the stakeholders concerned. The international environmental management standard ISO 14001 is an excellent tool and offers the structure for the practical application of these criteria and guidelines. Already today, most of Skanska's companies work with a certified environmental management system in accordance with ISO 14001 and by year-end all operations will be certified," says Axel Wenblad.

A number of international companies, including ABB, Alstom, Atlas Copco, Coyne & Bellier, Enron, Harza, Hydro-Quebec, Lahmeyer, Voith Siemens and Skanska, have assisted the World Commission on Dams in the work with the new guidelines.

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