# Sustainability Report 2018

Our goal is to create good and sustainable conditions for companies and individuals while preserving responsible enterprise and creating lasting commercial and social benefit.



# Integrating responsible enterprise throughout the value chain

In its role as a commercial law adviser, Vinge occupies a weighty position both in the business community and society at large. Our goal is to create good and sustainable conditions for companies and individuals while preserving responsible enterprise and creating lasting commercial and social benefit.

For Vinge, pursuing responsible and sustainable enterprise means acting ethically, encouraging good stakeholder relations, acting as a responsible employer and contributing to a well-functioning society. We believe that this provides long-term business and social benefit that affects both the organisation and individuals.

Vinge's sustainability work is grounded in our business – providing the best legal advice to our clients. Accordingly, it is critical that we train and promote the development of our colleagues in relation to sustainability issues and thereby integrate a sustainability perspective into all of the advice Vinge provides. This also allows Vinge to address a broader spectrum of risks and, furthermore, manage risks associated with our suppliers.

# Vinge's sustainability work in practice

Our sustainability work is based on internationally accepted standards for responsible enterprise. Since 2018, we have been members of the UN Global Compact and otherwise comply with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights.

Our Code of Conduct summarises the ethical principles applicable to all of our employees. In order to clarify certain aspects of the Code of Conduct, we have adopted specific policies and procedures in various business functions.

The board of directors and management group bear ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with our Code of Conduct. Management of the day-to-day work is the responsibility of various functions and groups which are responsible for implementation. As a part of the advancement of our sustainability work, an internal sustainability group was formed in 2018 consisting of representatives from management and various business areas and support functions. The group is responsible for coordinating our internal sustainability work.

Our sustainability work is divided into three focus areas which reflect our principal impacts.

These three focus areas are

- (1) advising clients;
- (2) internal sustainability work; and
- (3) social responsibility.

When providing advice, we integrate issues linked to human rights, working conditions, the environment and anti-corruption. In this way we can offer a broader perspective to our clients and mitigate the risks entailed in their businesses. We also strive to ensure that our advice does not negatively affect people or the environment.

Internally, we focus our sustainability work on employees, business ethics and regulatory compliance, as well as on the environment. In order to be a long-term partner for our clients, in addition to a leading business law firm, we must assume responsibility for our employees by creating conditions for a sound working environment where our employees can develop based on their individual circumstances. We also need to take into account the environmental impact of our offices, travel and procurement. Vinge does so while maintaining the highest standards of business ethics.

Our social commitment involves cooperative efforts in which we can contribute our skills and expertise to the growth and development of society, organisations and individuals.

In order to form a better understanding the sustainability priorities of our stakeholders and clients, we maintain a continuous dialogue regarding the issues they consider most important to sustainable businesses.

99 We seek to inspire greater trust in us as advisers and partners and ensure that our advice does not negatively affect people or the environment.

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# A word from the Managing Partner

At Vinge, we regard responsible enterprise as a prerequisite to achieving long-term success and continued profitability. We want to be the best possible partner for our clients in their business. Our strategy for responsible enterprise thus focuses on those areas in which we have the greatest impact. Accordingly, for us at Vinge, acting responsibly involves taking a holistic approach – giving the best advice to our clients, affording our employees the opportunity to grow, ensuring

that both Vinge and our business partners live up to

high standards of business ethics, and minimising our impact on the environment and climate. As a member of the UN Global Compact, I wish to reiterate Vinge's continued commitment to these principles.

This Sustainability Report is our Communication on Progress.

Maria-Pia Hope Managing Partner

# Advising clients

Our advice is based on both regulatory and international regimes such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. We assist clients by providing regular, tailor-made advice on matters of sustainability, identification of sustainability risks in transactions and investigations and crisis management.

For Vinge, it is essential that we integrate the sustainability perspective into all of our advice in every business area.

We help clients manage risks linked to sustainability. As a part of this trend, Vinge has also strengthened the expert group, Forensic, Risk & Compliance, consisting of experts from a broad spectrum of legal areas specialised in sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

# Steering documents

Vinge's Code of Conduct for employees is the main steering document that addresses our responsibilities and working methods. In addition to the Code of Conduct, we also work on the basis of the *IBA Practical Guide on Business and Human Rights for Business Lawyers* and the Swedish Bar Association's recommendations on implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights which are founded on the IBA's guidelines.

### **Identified risks**

The risks associated with providing advice can involve the full spectrum of sustainability issues. It is accordingly essential to integrate the risk perspective into our advice. Risks look very different depending on the industry, country of operation and the complexity of the clients' operations.

"When our clients come to us, it is because they have a major challenge, something that they often first tried to tackle themselves. Most of the challenges we encounter are also completely new. That is why it is so stimulating to work here."

— Employee, Vinge

**99** For Vinge, it is essential that we integrate the sustainability perspective into all of our advice in every business area.

We have a responsibility to ensure that the client is aware of the potential risks and to propose solutions for counteracting any negative impact on people or the environment.

# Measures implemented during the year and results

In 2018, we further strengthened the Forensic, Risk & Compliance team to meet the growing need for services in these areas. This team works with enterprise and human rights, anti-corruption and internal investigations. As a part of integrating the sustainability perspective into every business area, this practice group works in close cooperation with the other practice groups at the firm.

We have also updated our lists of questions used in transactions with in-depth questions regarding human rights, working conditions and anti-corruption. Questions relating to the environment have long been included on these lists and they are continuously evolving. In this way, we ensure that the risk aspect from a sustainability perspective is always included in the transactions in which we are involved.

### Goals for future years

In 2019, we will follow up the contents of the Code in various ways and ensure that it becomes a living guide for our colleagues. By these means, we can ensure that the sustainability perspective permeates every business area and that we thereby provide the best advice.

# Internal sustainability

# Our employees

A high level of expertise and genuine commitment on the part of our roughly 450 employees are essential to our success in providing advice of the highest quality to our clients. We work actively to attract talent and to develop and engage our employees. This is why we continuously strive to create a good working environment with equal opportunities for everyone who works with us. It is important to Vinge that everyone can reach their full potential.

# An equal-opportunities workplace free from discrimination

As a workplace characterised by diversity, we enjoy a broad knowledge and experience base and the opportunity to attract additional skilled employees. In this way, we benefit from more dynamic groups and innovative strength in our business. Accordingly, we strive to maintain an organisation represented by people of various ages and with diverse backgrounds, experience and personalities. Our employees are encouraged to be themselves, and it

goes without saying that we treat each other with respect, a notion clearly emphasised in our Code of Conduct. We have zero tolerance for any form of discrimination or harassment.

The issue of sexual harassment drew more attention in the latter part of 2017 after the attorney call to arms, #medvilkenrätt. As does the industry in general, we have zero tolerance for discrimination or abusive treatment of any type. Since the aforementioned call to arms, the issue has been on the agenda in various ways. In 2018, in addition to communicating our existing policy against harassment, sexual harassment and abusive treatment, we engaged in discussions in various contexts in order to obtain greater insight into how our employees and managers view their day-to-day experience and Vinge as a workplace. In 2019, we will also introduce a new form of frequent, anonymous employee survey which will address these issues, among others.

We have long had collaborative teams consisting of employees from various parts of the organisation. In

"Early on, you get the feeling that you're somebody Vinge is investing in. Everything is so smooth, and you feel taken care of, so that you can focus on your job – the law."

— Employee, Vinge

this context, we regularly raise issues linked to gender equality and equal treatment, identify and discuss risks in our operations, and agree on measures to reduce risks and promote diversity and equal treatment.

All things being equal, we strive for gender balance in each practice group. This is also reflected in our management positions and executive bodies. The breakdown on our board of directors is three women and six men. In the management group, the distribution is the opposite, with six women and three men. Of our three local managing partners, two are women and one is a man.

While we note that we have an even gender distribution at every level among our associate lawyers, the majority at the partner level consists of men. Accordingly, we have a specific goal of increasing the percentage of women partners, and our target is that 50 per cent of the newly elected partners during the period from 2015 to 2020 will be women. To date, the figure for the period is 41 per cent women and 59 per cent men.

In our effort to maintain an organisation characterised by diversity and gender equality, we always take into account the demography of the group when recruiting. In those cases in which we have an uneven distribution in terms of age, background, experience, personality or gender, we strive to identify candidates who can contribute greater diversity to the organisation. If we have several candidates for a position, we will choose the candidate who contributes to our diversity, all other qualifications being equal.

A more long–term initiative to increase diversity in the industry is our Diversity Project. The project is based on meeting young people at upper–secondary schools with a high ratio of students with foreign backgrounds in order to introduce them to the breadth of the legal profession. The goal of the DiversityProject is to motivate and inspire

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university studies in general and law studies in particular. The project began in 2002 and continues today. At present, we collaborate with upper-secondary schools in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmo.

# Health and balance at work

The health and well-being of our employees is of the utmost importance to Vinge as their employer. To meet the various needs relating to recovery and activities which promote health, we offer a number of exercise alternatives in connection with work such as running groups and team sports, and also provide a fitness allowance. One of our offices is equipped with its own

# Gender distribution, women and men:



<sup>\*</sup> new employees, junior associate, associate

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<sup>\*\*</sup> senior associate, manager, senior manager

gym. In 2018, inspirational lectures were held on the topic of health and training in mindfulness. We maintain a close cooperation with occupational health services, and the employees are offered regular health check-ups.

Periods of project-intensive work constitute a risk in our business. From a health perspective, it is of the utmost importance that workloads and working hours are monitored and that steps are taken when necessary. Accordingly, we monitor the workload on a weekly basis, and someone is designated in each practice group who bears responsibility for allocating work and establishing work teams on the basis staff availability. This prevents uneven workloads in that we can fully follow up to ensure that colleagues have the resources required in the form of support, time and expertise. Flexible working hours and modern, high-quality technology and tools that enable flexible work allow our employees to exercise greater influence over their own work situation. It is equally important that our managers serve as good role models and support the employees in creating a sustainable working life.

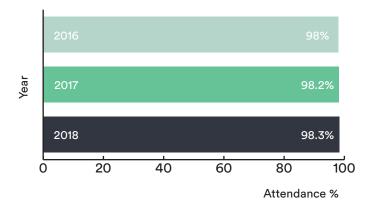
We have had increasing attendance rates for several years and, in 2018, absences due to illness were 1.7 per cent, which we believe indicates that we have succeeded in our initiatives to promote employee health. However, this is not an adequate indicator of a sound and healthy working environment, which is why we are introducing a new form of employee survey in 2019 in which we will ask about the working environment, health, leadership, commitment and motivation each quarter. By frequently measuring the employees' perception of their work and their motivation, we will improve the chances of working

proactively for a sustainable workplace and picking up any signs of imbalances and ill health. We see this as a useful tool in our systematic work environment efforts and, by these means, we will be able to identify risks in our working environment and monitor the development of steps taken in consultation with our safety representatives at each office.

# Good opportunities for skills development

It is essential that our employees possess a high level of expertise and conditions for providing services and advice of the highest quality. All Vinge employees are accordingly afforded opportunities for skills development, not least through our own Vinge Academy with training programmes in English, business administration, lawyer ethics, project management, personal brands, presentation technology and more. Vinge Academy is also supplemented with niched courses. In 2019, we are allocating more funding and resources to develop Vinge Academy, e.g. we have retained a Learning and Development Manager whose sole focus will be to work strategically with our skills development. More specific, individual skills requirements are identified during the annual employee-development discussions.

In addition to traditional courses, our employees are offered various internal rotation programmes, foreign internship programmes and secondments as in-house counsel with our clients, which leads to valuable experiences that broaden perspectives and provide new knowledge.



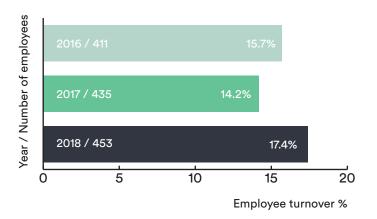
Access to our colleagues' expertise and the possibility of learning from each other remains the greatest source of knowledge. Noteworthy among the opportunities for knowledge exchange are mentorships, internal seminars, workshops, inter-office practice groups and expert groups or new collaborations. Our employees also have the possibility to grow by assuming extensive responsibility early on for both client work and the supervision of more junior colleagues.

## Attractive employer

Attracting talent and retaining the best employees is the highest priority in our business plan for long-term profitability and sustainable operations that meet our established, high quality standards. Today's struggle to acquire talent is palpable. We can proudly confirm that, in 2018, we were successful in our efforts to cultivate relationships with students at the universities with which we cooperate. We also succeeded in being ranked first in Prospera's annual survey among law students. We actively strive to establish contacts with law students early on and to display our practice and our employees. Through our recruiting efforts, Vingeveckan, student networks, lectures and various cooperative arrangements with student unions, we create many opportunities for contacts with students. In addition, we offer extra work in our talent pool, student thesis clerkships and summer associate programme. During the summer months of 2018, we had a total of 31 summer associates at our various offices, several of whom subsequently joined Vinge.

In 2018, we launched a new tactic to attract current and potential employees. Our goal was to highlight our employer brand, our identity, our culture and what distinguishes us as an employer. For example, in order to shed light on the opportunity to influence and realise ideas and initiatives, we introduced the practice that our newest employee will have a seat at a management group meeting. In order to strengthen our culture and our offering, Vinge managers have an important responsibility in serving as role models and enablers. To this end, our managers have undergone training to understand how, by means of their leadership, they can enhance and support the employee offering.

On 31 December 2018, Vinge had a total of 453 employees (this figure does not include hourly employees, interns, short-term employees or consultants). Employee turnover during the year was 17.4 per cent, somewhat higher than in 2016 and 2017, which is a figure that is naturally influenced by the prolonged, robust economy in which migration on the labour market is to be largely expected. In our business, the majority of the new employees are recent university graduates and, for Vinge, a degree of employee turnover is natural light of the fact that some will choose to start careers at Vinge only to move on, while others will elect to have a long career with us or even spend their entire career at Vinge. We are just as proud of those who are trained by us but nonetheless choose a different career path as we are of those who choose to stay on. Starting one's career at Vinge is regarded as a valuable business qualification, and we maintain contact with our



former employees as they become Vinge clients in their new roles.

In recent years, the business has expanded and the number of employees has steadily increased. In 2018, we employed 91 new employees, while a total of 77 employees left Vinge.

As we strive to be an attractive employer, it is important to remain sensitive to how our employees perceive their lives and work situation. In the reference groups that meet regularly, current operating issues are discussed. Representatives from Vinge management also participate in this context. With our new employee metrics, we will be able to monitor commitment, motivation, leadership, working environment, health and workload in real time and thereby work even more proactively with these issues.

**Suppliers** 

During the year we will be introducing a new Code of Conduct for suppliers which will clarify our established sustainability requirements. The primary sustainability risks in our supply chain concern both human rights and working conditions, as well as the environment and corruption. In terms of human rights and working conditions, the risks are the greatest in the supply chain of goods such as IT equipment, food, office furniture and office supplies, as well as in the provision of services such as maintenance of the premises and dry cleaning. The greatest environmental impact is from suppliers of the aforementioned goods, as well as travel and transport service providers.

During the year, as a part of the implementation of the new Code of Conduct for suppliers, we will begin to internally map our supply chains to identify where we should focus our attention in terms of follow-up and dialogue. In addition, we will develop procedures and processes for the evaluation and risk classification of suppliers.

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# **Environment and climate**

## Steering documents

We focus our environmental and climate work on the areas in which we have the greatest impact, i.e. the supply chain of the goods and services we buy, transportation of these goods, employee business travel, and how we use our offices. This is described in more detail in our *Environmental Policy*.

### **Identified risks**

There is a risk that transportation and couriers and goods and services will have a negative impact if we do not continuously strive to choose suppliers with an express and demonstrated focus on environmental issues.

In the design and management of our offices, there are risks related to the purchase of furniture and equipment, choice of energy sources and the control/operation of the premises. In addition, it is essential that we plan and manage our recycling and waste, and ensure that we reduce the latter. Prior to the upcoming project involving our future office in Stockholm, a thoroughly studied process is needed to avoid the risk of choosing materials that do not satisfy the highest possible environmental certification.

# Measures implemented during the year and results

At the beginning of the year, we will introduce the possibility to travel locally by means of electric scooters and electric bicycles in order to reduce travel by taxi. We have long had company bicycles. We also retain courier companies which, to the greatest extent possible, provide their services by bicycle courier. The results will be measured later in 2019.

We have improved sorting of waste by providing receptacles for various types of waste in open areas, and have refrained from using individual waste bins in order to avoid unsorted waste. We have also introduced *follow*-

of the year, we will introduce electric scooters and electric bicycles to reduce travel by taxi.

*me-print* and double-sided printouts that save a great deal of paper.

In the design of our new temporary offices in Stockholm, we ensured that, to the greatest possible extent, we re-used workplace furniture and other furnishings from earlier offices and, in addition, leased used furniture. We report everything we have recycled and the impact it has had on the environment. We also signed green electricity agreements that secure energy sources with as little climate impact as possible.

In dialogue with our landlord in Stockholm, we have ensured that the property we will occupy in 2021 meets "Breem In-Use", which is an international environmental method for certifying a building's operational performance. The standard makes it possible to pursue sustainable improvements through operational efficiency. The property is assessed in nine environmental categories: energy, water, transport, management, waste, pollution, health and well-being, land use and ecology and materials.

# Goals for future years

In the selection of transportation and courier services to and from the offices, we shall, to the extent possible, choose the best alternative based on environmental considerations. Our goal is that 30 per cent of the deliveries will be made by means of electric-powered or fuel-free alternatives, electric-powered taxis, bicycle couriers, etc. When booking business travel, environmental considerations shall be factored into the selection of the most suitable means of travel on each occasion and our goal is to carbon offset all air travel.

A continued and increased emphasis on sorting and recycling of waste will result in alternative choices in respect of waste receptacles, purchases of recyclable articles or biodegradable single-use items.

Prior to impending procurement/purchases of furnishings and equipment for our office in Stockholm, our goal is that 100 per cent of all workplace furniture and 50 per cent of the remaining furnishings will meet eco-label

standards. Our goals for energy consumption in the new office with occupancy in 2021 is a reduction of 25 per cent and to consume energy from renewable sources.

Following the return to new environmentally optimised offices, our goal is to further reduce our total impact on the environment and climate. Through modern technology which saves resources and by modifying our behaviour, we will become even more aware of how we manage food waste.

Future goals for the Gothenburg office include reviewing purchases and consumption of raw goods from a climate perspective in our staff canteen and examining what we can do with leftover food.

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# **Business ethics**

We are careful to always act in a way that accords with generally accepted practices for attorneys and other regulations which are applicable to Vinge. This mean that we take steps to:

- combat corruption, money laundering, the financing of terrorism and violations of international sanctions;
- · avoid conflicts of interest and insider trading; and
- protect the information and the personal data we process.

### Steering documents

Our business ethics steering documents consist of both external regulations such as the *Swedish Bar Association's Code of Conduct* and the *Swedish Anti-Corruption Institute's "Code regarding gifts, rewards and other benefits in business"* as well as multiple internal policies and guidelines. Examples of internal policies and guidelines. Include our Code of Conduct, ethical guidelines, rules for trading in shares and other financial instruments, guidelines for combating money laundering, financing of terrorism and corruption, the information security policy and guidelines for handling personal data.

### **Identified risks**

The failure to act in a commercially ethical manner would also entail running afoul of laws and other regulations. This is not an option from a business perspective or a societal perspective. In addition to damaging our brand, Vinge as a company and its individual employees would face the risk of incurring both criminal and disciplinary liability. It would also exclude us from business opportunities.

Shortcomings in our behaviour could also contribute to money laundering, financing of terrorism or the circumvention of international sanctions. These regulations have strong links to other sustainability areas, primarily human rights, and our failure to act properly could therefore have an impact on these rights.

# Measures implemented and goals

Business ethics are principally concerned with regulatory compliance. Accordingly, we have systematically worked for many years to ensure that we adhere to rules applicable to Vinge. This primarily involves continuously informing and training employees and implementing procedures and processes to limit the risks of participating in undesirable actions, operations or transactions.

We encourage our employees to report violations or suspected violations. Such violations can be reported through our whistle-blower system, which allows the person who is submitting the report to remain anonymous. No incidents have been reported via the system since it was introduced in 2017.

From a sustainability perspective, it is especially important to be highly familiar with the rules designed to prevent money laundering, financing of terrorism and corruption, and to maintain processes intended to prevent us from participating in such activities. When entering into business relationships, we conduct background checks of our clients and do so again not later than every three years. The goal is to have sufficient knowledge of our clients that we have solid reasons for assuming that our activities on their behalf do not conflict with international sanctions or entail participation in money launde-

ring or the financing of terrorism. In 2018, the procedures regarding these background checks were revised, in part in light of the new *General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*.

As regards the *General Data Protection Regulation*, we have determined during the year what personal data we process and how we process it, and we have also updated our guidelines. We also adopted an external and an internal integrity policy. Our ambition for 2019 is to evaluate whether an electronic tool can help us ensure that we comply with the *General Data Protection Regulation* at all times and, if the evaluation is positive, to implement such a tool.

Vinge's employees are continuously educated by means of traditional training and e-courses. The e-courses we offer are compulsory and address subjects such as risk management and attorney ethics, money laundering and financing of terrorism, information security and cyber security. In 2018, we also introduced so-called "nano training". Nano training is a learning process consisting of a series of short web-based lessons. So far, our compulsory nano courses have been provided regarding the subjects, GDPR - the EU's new General Data Protection Regulation and information security. In 2019, the goal is to update, among others, the e-course on how money laundering and financing of terrorism should be combated.

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# Social responsibility

Vinge advises clients in achieving successful transactions. We also assist socially beneficial organisations achieve their goals. Our desire to contribute to a better society explains why we have contributed our knowledge to a number of different initiatives in order to support and develop organisations that steer society in a positive direction.

We have chosen to divide our social involvement into three main areas: society as a whole, enterprises and individuals. We are involved in social issues such as education and knowledge exchange, inclusion and individual development, and the promotion of the conditions in which people can grow.

As far as society is concerned, we invest in long-term projects to disseminate knowledge, work for greater diversity in the Swedish legal system, and elevate inclusion on the Swedish labour market.

Our involvement with enterprise aims to support entrepreneurship, innovation and growth at home and in global contexts.

It is our view that people grow through commitment, education, knowledge exchange and relationships. Where individuals are concerned, we want to create and disseminate new knowledge and thereby enhance the conditions in which people can grow in the academia, business, sports and other areas, both in Sweden and around the world.

"The Olympic brand may be the world's strongest. The SOC is responsible for matters in Sweden concerning the Olympics and it is our task to safeguard these rights in the Swedish market. We do this together with Vinge's experts."

— Anna Lundin, Marketing and Sales Director, Swedish Olympic Committee

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### **Examples of projects**

Vinge's *Diversity Project* has awarded 175 scholarships in the past 16 years. The goal is to contribute to greater diversity in the legal profession. We strive to broadly reach out in schools to disseminate knowledge about what it means to work as a lawyer and support the ambition to study, and to study law in particular. We also support law students by offering mentors and preference for summer associate positions at Vinge.

We support local entrepreneurs and start-ups, as well as global organisations. In our cooperation with *Ashoka*, we assist social entrepreneurs who drive change in the global community. *SSE Business Lab* is an initiative in entrepreneurship and innovation and fully in line with Vinge's ambitions to support our domestic labour market. Our own initiative, *Vinge Growth*, is an endeavour that offers companies with a strong growth ambition guidance in every area of business law.

Vinge cooperates with the Swedish Olympic Committee (SOC). The cooperation concerns areas in which our knowledge, expertise and experience benefit growing Swedish Olympic activities. These comprise rights and brand issues, contract law and company issues, among others. The SOC's ambitions and values match our own activities well, as the SOC and Vinge both strive to contribute to individuals being able to develop and grow through knowledge, competence and expertise.

Based on the results and our stakeholders' expectations, we will further focus on our social benefit involvement with the aim of contributing to taking long-term responsibility.