

Press release

Five years of decommissioning and options for the future of the Mühleberg Nuclear Power Plant site

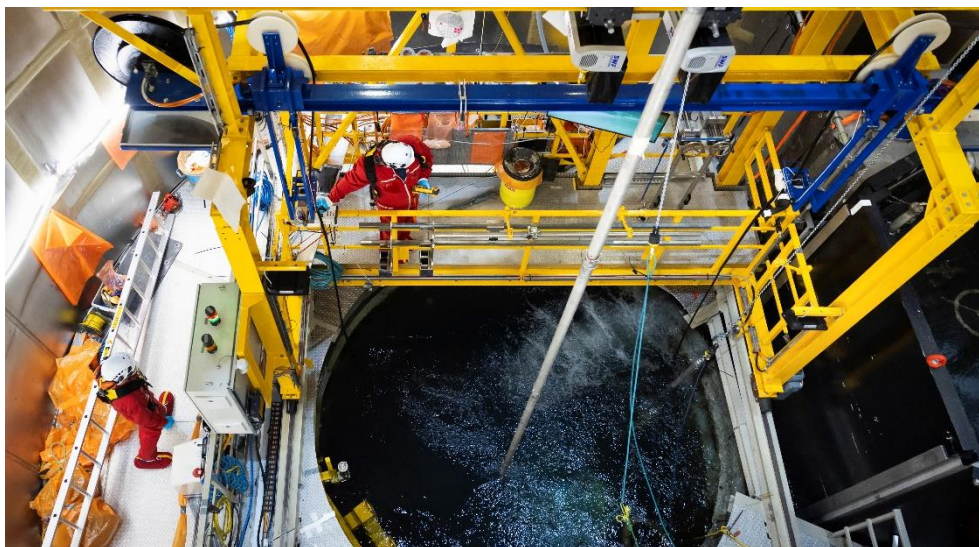
BKW is considering repurposing the site for energy generation

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Five years on, the Mühleberg Nuclear Power Plant (KKM) is successfully being dismantled on time and on budget. BKW is now considering the medium and long-term future of the entire site, which stretches from the Mühleberg hydropower plant to KKM. The area is strategically significant as it possesses the necessary infrastructure and connections for larger-scale energy projects. BKW wants to invest in the canton of Bern and sees the development as a great opportunity. By utilising a variety of potential options, BKW wants to contribute to energy security and grid stability in Switzerland – in line with the climate targets.



View of the reactor pit where the nuclear components in the reactor pressure vessel are currently being dismantled. (Photo: Peter Klaunzer, Keystone)

BKW shut down the Mühleberg Nuclear Power Plant on 20 December 2019. The dismantling process began a few days later, on 6 January 2020, and has been running on time and on budget ever since. KKM has been without nuclear fuel since early September 2023. A total of 418 spent fuel elements were sent to the interim storage facility in Würenlingen in 66 shipments over the previous two

years. With the removal of the last fuel elements, the level of radioactivity in KKM has been reduced by over 99 per cent. Alongside the dismantling work in the condensation of the machine house and various work in the reactor building, nuclear components are being disassembled in a process that is set to finish in late 2025. The cutting and packaging of the activated control rods was completed successfully in October 2024. The nuclear decommissioning process is set to finish in late 2031. When this milestone is reached, KKM will no longer pose a radiological risk. Once assessed and approved by the authorities, the conventional dismantling process can begin and the KKM site can be repurposed. The decommissioning order requires BKW to submit an application to repurpose the site to the SFOE by the end of 2027.

BKW is examining options to repurpose the site for energy generation

“BKW does not believe it would be prudent to simply convert the KKM site into a green meadow,” says Robert Itschner, CEO of BKW. “We want to tap the potential of the site and develop meaningful solutions to supply Switzerland with sustainable energy.”

BKW has begun consultations with the canton of Bern on the repurposing of the site. The site, which stretches from the hydropower plant to KKM, is ideal for energy generation. The area is large and has excellent connections to the high-voltage network. It remains to be seen how exactly the site will be used. “Various options are on the table,” says Robert Itschner. In the medium term, for example, a battery storage system could be used to stabilise the electricity grid, in combination with a computing centre if necessary. Together, these technologies offer a flexible, efficient solution to counter fluctuations in the electricity grid and to supply and use renewable energy, such as wind and solar energy, in line with demand.

In the longer term, looking beyond Switzerland’s 2050 climate strategy, other options such as large-scale power plants with low CO₂ emissions are conceivable on the site in Mühleberg. These could contribute to the supply of energy in Switzerland.

BKW

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