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CONTENTS

FOREWORD	7
1. SCOPE	11
1.1 Introduction	11
1.3.1 VSC Transmission	12
1.3.2 VSC Phase Unit	12
1.3.3 VSC Unit	12
1.3.4 VSC Substation	12
1.3.5 Two-Level Converter	12
1.3.6 Three-Level Converter	12
1.3.7 Multi-Level Converter	12
1.3.8 VSC Pulse Number p	12
1.4 VSC Unit Equipment	13
1.4.1 VSC Valve	13
1.4.2 Diode Valve	13
1.4.3 VSC Valve Level	13
1.5 VSC Substation Equipment	13
1.5.1 Interface Transformer	13
1.5.2 Phase Reactor	13
1.5.3 VSC DC Capacitor	13
1.6 References	13
2. VSC TRANSMISSION APPLICATIONS	14
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 Examples of Possible VSC transmission Applications	15
2.3 The Voltage Sourced Converter as a Black Box	15
2.4 The Principles of Active and Reactive Power Control	16
2.4.1 The Principle of Active Power Control	16
2.4.2 Principle of Reactive Power Control	17
2.4.3 Basic PQ Diagram for a VSC Station	18
2.5 Operating Principles of a VSC transmission Scheme	19
2.6 Losses	19
2.7 Summary of the Basic Characteristics of VSC transmission	20
2.8 REFERENCES	21
3. BASIC OPERATING PRINCIPLES OF VSC TRANSMISSION	23
3.1 Introduction	23
3.2 Basic Operational Principle of Two-Level Converters	24
3.3 Two-Level VSC — Three-Phase Configuration	26
3.3.1 Terminal Voltages	26
3.3.2 Fundamental Frequency Equations — Square Wave Operation	27
3.4 Active and Reactive Power VSC	28
3.5 VSC Control and Harmonics	29
3.6 References	30
4. VSC TRANSMISSION TOPOLOGIES	31
4.1 Introduction	31
4.2 Converter Phase Unit Topologies	31
4.2.1 Converter Phase Unit Topologies—General Aspects	32
4.2.2 Two-Level Converters	33
4.2.3 Three-Level Neutral Point Clamped Converter	34
4.2.4 Multi-Level Neutral Point Clamped Converter	35
4.2.5 Three-Level Floating Capacitor Topology	36
4.2.6 Multi-Level Floating Capacitor Topology	37
4.3 Combination of Converter Phase Units	38
4.3.1 General	38
4.3.2 Combination Using Separate Transformer Windings	39
4.3.2.1 Series Connection of Converters	39
4.3.2.2 Parallel Connection of Converters	40
4.3.2.3 Series and Parallel Connection on the DC Side	41
4.4 Concluding Discussion	42
4.4.1 Converter Phase Unit Topologies	42
4.4.2 Combination of Converter Units	43
4.5. References	43

5. VSC TRANSMISSION VALVES.....	44
5.1 Introduction.....	44
5.2 Semiconductors for VSC Transmission.....	44
5.2.1 Overview of High Power Semiconductors.....	44
5.2.2 Thyristors.....	44
5.2.3 GTO and IGCT (GCT).....	45
5.2.4 IGBT Type Devices.....	45
5.2.5 Comparison of Devices.....	46
5.3 VSC Valve Design Considerations.....	47
5.3.1 Reliability (IGBT).....	47
5.3.2 IGBT Current Rating.....	47
5.3.3 Transient Current Requirements.....	47
5.3.4 Diode Requirements.....	48
5.4 Thermal Design.....	49
5.4.1 Converter Power Losses.....	49
5.4.2 Cooling System Design.....	50
5.4.3 IGBT Losses.....	50
5.4.4 Voltage Rating.....	50
5.4.4.1 Aspects of Series Connection [5-1].....	51
5.4.4.2 Commutation Process.....	51
5.5 Mechanical Structure of the Valve [5-1].....	52
5.6 Valve Hall or Valve Enclosures.....	53
5.7 References.....	53
6. OTHER MAIN EQUIPMENT FOR VSC TRANSMISSION SCHEMES.....	54
6.1 Introduction.....	54
6.2 Power Components of a VSC transmission Scheme.....	55
6.3 VSC Substation Circuit-breaker.....	56
6.4 AC System Side Harmonic Filters.....	56
6.5 Radiofrequency Interference Filters.....	57
6.6 Interface Transformers and Phase Reactors.....	57
6.7 Converter Side Harmonic Filters and HF Blocking Filter.....	58
6.8 VSC DC Capacitor.....	60
6.9 DC Filter.....	61
6.10 Neutral Point Grounding Branch.....	61
6.11 DC Reactor.....	61
6.12 Common Mode Blocking Reactor.....	62
6.13 DC Cable and Overhead Transmission Lines.....	63
6.14 Special Aspects for Back-to-Back DC Transmission Systems.....	63
6.15 References.....	64
7. VSC CONTROL.....	65
7.1 Introduction.....	65
7.2 Modes of Control.....	66
7.2.1 AC Voltage Control.....	68
7.2.2 Power Control.....	68
7.2.3 Reactive Power Control.....	69
7.2.4 DC Voltage Control.....	69
7.2.5 Current Control.....	70
7.2.6 Frequency Control.....	70
7.3 Information Requirements for Controls.....	70
7.4 Performance of Controls.....	70
7.5 Levels of Controls.....	71
7.5.1 Firing Control.....	71
7.5.2 Converter Unit Control.....	72
7.5.3 System Control.....	72
7.6 Coordination of Controls.....	72
7.6.1 Supply to a Load with No Other Source of Generation.....	73
7.6.2 Interconnection of Two or More AC Power Systems.....	73
7.6.3 Telecommunication Between Converter Stations.....	75
7.6.4 Supply from a Wind Farm.....	76
7.7 References.....	76

8. FAULT PERFORMANCE AND PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS	77
8.1 Protection System Philosophy	77
8.2 Type of Protection and Fault Clearing Actions	78
8.3 VSC Substation Protection	79
8.4 Internal Faults in the VSC Substation	79
8.4.1 Internal AC Bus Fault	79
8.4.2 DC Bus Fault	80
8.4.3 Component Failure	80
8.4.3.1 VSC Valve Failure (see Chapter 5)	80
8.4.3.2 VSC DC Capacitor Failure	80
8.4.3.3 Phase Reactor Failure	81
8.5 External Faults and Switching Transients on the AC Side	81
8.5.1 AC Voltage Dip	81
8.5.2 AC Temporary Overvoltage	81
8.5.3 AC Lightning Overvoltage	82
8.5.4 AC Switching Overvoltage	82
8.5.5 AC Voltage Phase Shifting	82
8.5.6 AC Voltage Phase Unbalance	82
8.5.7 DC Overvoltage	83
8.5.8 Post-Fault Recovery	83
8.6 Faults on the DC Transmission Line or Cable	83
8.6.1 DC Cable Fault	83
8.6.2 DC Overhead Line Fault	83
8.6.3 DC Bus Overvoltage (d.c. overhead line only)	84
8.6.4 DC Overvoltage	84
8.6.5 Other Protection Actions	84
8.7 References	84
9. HARMONIC PERFORMANCE	85
9.1 Introduction	85
9.2 Wave Distortion	85
9.3 Fundamental and Harmonics	86
9.3.1 Three-Phase 2-Level VSC	86
9.3.2 Pulse Width Modulation (PWM)	86
9.3.3 Multi-Pulse and Multi-Level Converters	89
9.3.4 Comparison of the Harmonic Content at the AC Terminals of the VSC Valve Units	90
9.4 Harmonic Voltages on Power Systems Due to VSC Operation	92
9.5 Design Considerations for Harmonic Filters (AC side)	94
9.6 DC Side Filtering	94
9.7 References	95
10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	97
10.1 Introduction	97
10.2 Audible Noise	97
10.3 Visual Impact	98
10.4 Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF)	98
10.5 Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC)	98
10.6 References	100
11. APPLICATION STUDIES	101
11.1 Introduction	101
11.2 Feasibility Studies	102
11.2.1 Economic Justification of a VSC Scheme	103
11.2.2 Comparing Alternative Termination Points for the VSC Scheme	103
11.2.3 Comparing the Selected Scheme with Alternative Solutions	104
11.2.4 Preparing an Outline Specification for the VSC transmission Project	105
11.3 Specification Studies	105
11.3.1 Specifying the Performance Requirements for the VSC Scheme	106
11.3.2 AC System Data for the Design of the VSC Scheme	107
11.4 Implementation Studies	107
11.5 Modelling of the VSC Scheme	108
11.5.1 Load-Flow Modelling Requirements	109
11.5.2 Short-Circuit and Harmonics Modelling Requirements	109
11.5.3 Electromechanical Stability Modelling Requirements	109
11.5.4 Electromagnetic Transient Modelling Requirements	110
11.6 References	111

12. TESTING AND COMMISSIONING	112
12.1 Introduction	112
12.2 The Testing and Commissioning Process	112
12.3 Factory Tests	113
12.3.1 Component Tests	113
12.3.2 Control System Tests	113
12.4 Site Tests (Commissioning)	114
12.4.1 General	114
12.4.2 Precommissioning Tests	114
12.4.3 Subsystem Tests	114
12.4.4 System Tests	116
12.4.4.1 High-Voltage Energisation	116
12.4.4.2 Converter Operational Tests	117
12.4.5 Trial Operation	118
12.4.6 Acceptance Tests	118
12.5 References	119
13. LIFE-CYCLE COST	120
13.1 Introduction	120
13.2 Determination of the Profitability of an Investment	120
13.3 Life-cycle Costing	120
13.3.1 Operational Life	121
13.3.2 Interest and Inflation Rates — Calculation of Present Value	121
13.3.3 Initial Costs of the System	121
13.3.4 Cost of Spare Parts	121
13.3.5 Annual Costs of System Losses	122
13.3.6 Cost of Periodic Refurbishment	122
13.3.7 Annual Operating Costs of the System	122
13.3.8 Annual Maintenance Costs of the System	123
13.3.9 Annual Cost of Unavailability	123
13.3.10 Salvage Value or Disposal Costs of VSC transmission Systems	123
13.3.10.1 Salvage Value	123
13.3.10.2 Disposal Cost	123
13.4 Benefits of Controllability	124
13.5 References	124
14. COMPARISON OF LINE COMMUTATED CONVERTER AND VSC	125
14.1 Introduction	125
14.2 Differences Resulting from the Commutation Principle	125
14.2.1 Dependence on an AC Voltage Source	125
14.2.2 Reactive-Power Consumption or Generation	125
14.2.3 Short-Circuit Level Requirement for Stable Operation	126
14.2.4 Harmonics and Filter Requirements	126
14.2.5 Overvoltages in the AC System	127
14.2.6 Robustness against AC System Faults	127
14.3 Differences Resulting from the Source Type	127
14.3.1 Protection against DC System Faults	127
14.3.2 Flexibility of the Power Flow Reversal in the Multi-Terminal HVDC System	127
14.3.3 Cost, Losses, Reliability and the Availability of the Large-Scale HVDC System	128
14.4 Summary	128
14.5 References	130
15. VSC TRANSMISSION OUTLOOK	131
15.1 Introduction	131
15.2 Future Trends	131
15.2.1 Reliability	131
15.2.2 Capital Cost of a VSC transmission Installation	131
15.2.3 Controllable Switching Components	131
15.2.4 Power Losses	133
15.2.5 Increased DC Voltage and Power Rating of DC Extruded Cables	133
15.2.6 Utilisation of the Functionality and Controllability of VSC transmission	133
15.3 References	134
16. CONCLUSION	135
APPENDIX A: LIST OF VSC TRANSMISSION SCHEMES	137

APPENDIX B: FUNCTIONAL SPECIFICATION FOR A VSC TRANSMISSION SYSTEM 153

- 1. Introduction 153
- 2. Utility and Manufacturer Information Requirements 153
 - 2.1 General Requirements 154
 - 2.2 Power System Characteristics 154
 - 2.3a DC Line/Cable (In case of Turnkey, supplied by the converter manufacturer) 155
 - 2.3b DC Line/Cable (Not supplied by the converter manufacturer) 155
 - 2.4 Steady-State Performance 156
 - 2.5 Dynamic Performance, Control and Monitoring Facilities 156
 - 2.6 Maintenance and Spares 157
 - 2.7 Site and Environmental 157
 - 2.8 Factory and Commissioning Tests 158
 - 2.9 Other Considerations 158
- 3. Equipment Design Standards 158

APPENDIX C: OVERVIEW OF LINE COMMUTATED CONVERTER BASED HVDC 160

- 1. Introduction 160
- 2. System Configuration 160
 - 2.1 Converters 161
 - 2.2 Converter Transformers 162
 - 2.3 Harmonic Filters 162
 - 2.4 Shunt Capacitors 162
 - 2.5 DC Reactors 162
 - 2.6 DC Connections 162
- 3. HVDC System Control and Operating Characteristics 162
- 4. List of LCC HVDC Schemes 164
- 5. References 166



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DC TRANSMISSION USING VOLTAGE SOURCED CONVERTERS**FOREWORD**

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Draft PAS	Report on voting
22F/129/NP	22F/148/RVN

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DC TRANSMISSION USING VOLTAGE SOURCED CONVERTERS

INTRODUCTION

HVDC transmission was first put into commercial service in 1954 and has since been used extensively for the interconnection of asynchronous a.c. networks and for the transmission of power over long distances. The switching elements used for the conversion between a.c. and d.c. were able to switch on as commanded, but depended on a naturally occurring current zero for the turn-off process. Thus the technology relies on the presence of an a.c. voltage in the network for the commutation process, and is known as line commutated converter (LCC) HVDC technology. In this PAS, it will be referred to as LCC HVDC. This technology is still used extensively for HVDC transmission. LCC HVDC schemes installed by the end of 2004 have a total rating in excess of 60 GW, with more being added each year.

The use of voltage sourced converters for d.c. power transmission (VSC transmission) was introduced with the commissioning in 1997 of the 3MW, ± 10 kVd.c. technology demonstrator at Hellsjön, Sweden. VSC transmission enables reliable and controllable power transfer between networks. In principle, the operation of its converters (rectifier and inverter) at the two ends of the VSC transmission does not rely on the strength of the connected a.c. systems. Furthermore, it provides independent control of the reactive power at the two ends and independently of the active power transfer over the d.c. transmission.

The object of this PAS is to describe the VSC transmission technology, with a particular view to the issues to be considered when it is applied at voltages above 100 kVdc, and power in excess of 100 MW. It provides information about the equipment included in a VSC transmission scheme, as well as the characteristics and performance that can be expected.

The information presented here is aimed at several groups of people:

- transmission network owners/operators planning to build a VSC transmission scheme;
- those involved in the specification of a VSC transmission scheme, for example transmission or distribution network owners/operators;
- investors considering inter-connectors and other merchant transmission links;
- anyone wanting to know more about the VSC transmission technology.

Some readers may have technical interests and some may have non-technical interests. Therefore, this PAS has been structured in such a way that different needs can be met by reading selected sections.

For readers without particular interest in the detailed technical issues, the chapters of greatest interest are:

Chapter 2 VSC Transmission Applications

Chapter 10 Environmental Impact

Chapter 13 Life Cycle Cost

Chapter 14 Comparison of Line Commutated Converter and VSC

For readers wanting a deeper insight into the VSC transmission technology, but without knowledge of LCC HVDC technology, it may be advantageous to read Appendix C before reading the rest of the PAS.

OVERVIEW OF VSC TRANSMISSION TECHNOLOGY

Since its introduction in the early 1950s, LCC HVDC technology has undergone continuous development, particularly in the areas of converter switches and controls. Today LCC HVDC schemes provide reliable, efficient and cost-effective solutions for many applications. The use of modern techniques have made it possible to obtain stable operation for LCC HVDC schemes connected to much weaker a.c. networks than previously.

Other fields of power electronics, such as industrial drives, have contributed to the development of new semiconductor devices, because the quantity of devices produced each year for these applications can be many times the number required for HVDC schemes. Motor drives have, over the years, moved on from using line-commutated converters to the use of voltage sourced converters (VSC) with pulse width modulation (PWM) control, which results in compact and more controllable drives. Usually such drives operate at relatively low a.c. and d.c. voltage and do not use series-connected semiconductors.

The 3-MW Hellsjön VSC transmission installation put into service in Sweden in 1997 was an extension of modern motor drive technology. To reach a transmission voltage of 10 kVdc, however, series-connected semiconductors were required. The trial installation proved the feasibility of the technology and demonstrated its superior technical capability when compared to LCC HVDC. Subsequently, more schemes have been installed, with the largest in service at the end of 2004 having a rating of 330 MW and ± 150 kVdc. CIGRÉ has given this new type of d.c. transmission the name VSC transmission.

VSC transmission has a number of technical features that are superior to those of LCC HVDC schemes and make it especially attractive for the following applications:

- feeding into passive networks;
- transmission to/from weak a.c. systems;
- enhancement of an a.c. system;
- land cable systems;
- supply of offshore loads;
- connection to wind farms (on-shore or off-shore) or wave power generation;
- in-feeds to city centres;
- multi-terminal systems.

Continuing developments in semiconductors and VSC transmission technology are likely to make VSC transmission attractive in an increasing number of applications as research and development efforts continue to bring down the capital cost and power losses of the converters.

OVERVIEW OF THIS PAS

This PAS consists of 16 chapters and three appendices.

Chapter 1 provides a list of definitions of symbols and terms introduced in the PAS. Where possible, the terminology for high-voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission, as defined in IEC 60633, has been used. The definitions included in Chapter 1 have been limited to those which are new, as far as HVDC transmission is concerned.

Chapter 2 describes a VSC transmission scheme as a black box and outlines the main characteristics of a VSC transmission scheme, in particular the principles of active and reactive power control, and its operational characteristics. The chapter also outlines potential applications and the present status of VSC transmission technology.

Chapter 3 presents the operational characteristics of a VSC transmission scheme in greater detail, starting from the operation of a 2-level converter. The basic characteristics of 3-level and multi-level converters are described, as well as the use of pulse width modulation (PWM).

Chapter 4 describes different converter topologies which may be used for VSC transmission. Simplified circuit diagrams are given for each of these topologies, along with their waveshapes.

Chapter 5 gives an overview of the switches, called VSC valves, which are used to convert between a.c. and d.c. The chapter includes a description of the various semiconductors that could be used for a VSC valve, and outlines the design considerations for a high-voltage VSC valve.

Chapter 6 presents a typical power circuit diagram for a VSC substation and outlines the characteristics of the other major power equipment that may be used.

Chapter 7 discusses the different modes of control that can be used for a VSC transmission scheme, as well as the information needs and performance required. A possible hierarchy of controls is described, followed by a discussion of the controls for a number of different applications.

Chapter 8 discusses the fault performance and protection requirements for a VSC transmission scheme. It outlines the mechanisms leading to different faults and their consequences. Faults (and transients) within the converter on the a.c. and the d.c. side are discussed.

Chapter 9 describes the harmonics generated by a VSC substation and various methods that can be adopted to minimise the need for filtering, including the use of multi-level or multi-pulse converters and PWM switching. The consequences of harmonics in power networks are outlined, and the design of a.c. and d.c. harmonic filters is presented.

Chapter 10 covers the environmental impact of a VSC substation. The topics include audible noise, electric and magnetic fields (EMF), and radio-frequency interference (RFI).

Chapter 11 discusses the studies that may be performed as part of the planning and implementation of a VSC transmission scheme. The studies include those needed as background to the investment decision, those required for the tender exercise, and those for the simulation of critical system tests.

Chapter 12 gives a brief overview of the testing and commissioning associated with a VSC transmission scheme. The process to be followed is very similar to that used for HVDC or FACTS.

Chapter 13 outlines the life-cycle cost of a VSC transmission scheme, including capital cost, power losses, maintenance, disposal costs, refurbishment and cost of unavailability.

Chapter 14 provides a brief comparison of LCC HVDC and VSC transmission.

Chapter 15 looks ahead to the next generation of semiconductors and outlines developments that could further improve the characteristics of the VSC transmission technology and lead to an increase in the number of installed VSC schemes.

Chapter 16 is a brief conclusion.

Appendix A gives a list of VSC transmission schemes in operation at the end of 2004.

Appendix B provides a guideline for a functional specification of a VSC transmission scheme.

Appendix C presents a brief overview of LCC HVDC transmission and is primarily intended for readers who have little or no knowledge of this technology. A list of all LCC HVDC schemes in service at the end of 2004 is included.

DC TRANSMISSION USING VOLTAGE SOURCED CONVERTERS

1. SCOPE

The object of this PAS is to describe the VSC transmission technology, with a particular view to the issues to be considered when it is applied at voltages above 100 kVdc, and power in excess of 100 MW. It provides information about the equipment included in a VSC transmission scheme, as well as the characteristics and performance that can be expected.

1.1 Introduction

This PAS uses the terminology established by IEC 60633 [1-1]. However, due to the differences in converter technology and operating characteristics of voltage sourced converters (VSC) compared to line-commutated converters (LCC), it was felt to be appropriate to define some new terms used in this PAS. Those terms that are either identical to, or obvious extensions, of the IEC 60633 terminology have not been defined.

To support the explanations, Figure 1.1 presents the basic diagram of a VSC substation.

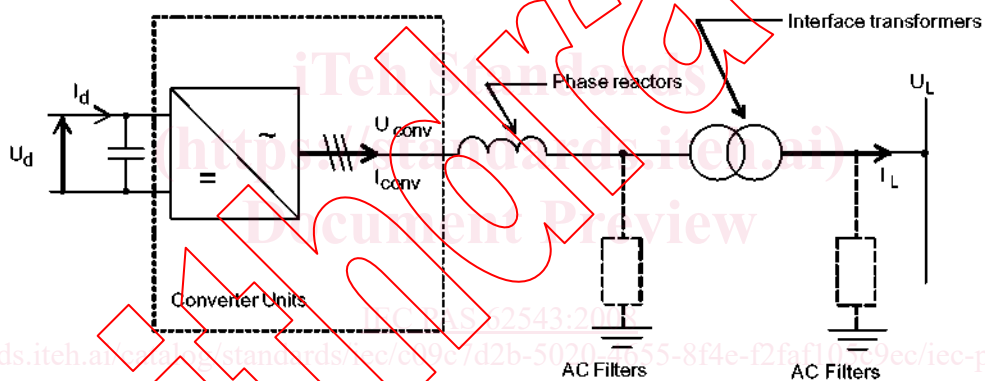


Figure 1.1- Basic diagram of a VSC substation

For the purpose of this PAS, the symbol for a VSC valve is shown in Figure 1.2.

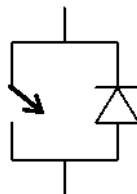


Figure 1.2 - Symbol of a VSC valve as used in this PAS

1.2 LIST OF LETTER SYMBOLS

- U_{conv} Line-to-line a.c. voltage of the converter unit(s), r.m.s value, including harmonics
 I_{conv} Alternating current of the converter unit(s), r.m.s value, including harmonics

1.3 GENERAL TERMS AND DEFINITIONS RELATED TO CONVERTER CIRCUITS AND POLE TOPOLOGIES FOR VSC CIRCUITS

1.3.1 VSC Transmission

A high-voltage d.c. transmission system in which the conversion between a.c. and dc and vice versa is performed by means of voltage sourced converters.

1.3.2 VSC Phase Unit

The equipment used to connect the two d.c. busbars to one a.c. terminal.

Note: In the simplest implementation, the VSC phase unit consists of two VSC valves. It may also include control and protection equipment and other components.

1.3.3 VSC Unit

System consisting of three VSC phase units, together with VSC unit control equipment, essential protective and switching devices and auxiliaries, if any, used for conversion.

1.3.4 VSC Substation

Part of a VSC transmission scheme, consisting of one or more VSC unit(s) installed in a single location together with buildings, VSC d.c. capacitors, reactors, transformers, filters, control, monitoring, protective, measuring and auxiliary equipment, as applicable.

1.3.5 Two-Level Converter

A converter in which the voltage at the a.c. terminals of the VSC unit is switched between two discrete d.c. voltage levels.

1.3.6 Three-Level Converter

A converter in which the voltage at the a.c. terminals of the VSC unit is switched between three discrete d.c. voltage levels.

1.3.7 Multi-Level Converter

A converter in which the voltage at the a.c. terminals of the VSC unit is switched between more than three discrete d.c. voltage levels.

1.3.8 VSC Pulse Number p

Characteristic of a VSC unit connection expressed as the number of non-simultaneous symmetrical commutations occurring during one cycle of the a.c. line voltage, assuming the valves in each VSC unit are controlled to achieve full wave rectification/inversion.