

MESC looks beyond oil and gas, forays into renewable energy industry

AT ADIPEC 2017, Saudi Arabia-based Middle East Specialized Cables Company (MESC) showcased its instrumentation cables for the global oil and gas sector. Tamer Salama, vice-president for sales and marketing, also talked about the reorganisation of MESC's structure for better business efficiency.

Speaking with *Oil Review Middle East*, Mr Salama said that the company has been supplying instrumentation cables globally for 25 years to the oil and gas sector, with more than 35,000 types, thus also customising to suit the clients' requirements.

"Our strong R&D department also ensures that we constantly innovate on cabling solutions, and now we are looking to cater to sectors beyond oil and gas." Elaborating on this, he added that the company manufactures cables for the transportation sector as well as nuclear and renewables industries.

"We have seen a dynamic economic change in the Saudi Arabian market over the past two years. Until the end of 2016, it was still heavily dependent on the oil and gas. Now with Vision 2030 in place, the market dependency is diversifying from oil and gas. Saudi Arabia's oil and gas market is starting to become saturated, but other sectors like renewable energy, transportation and manufacturing are developing much faster. So, we are adapting our portfolio to address such segments as solar and nuclear."

Mr Salama pointed out that the cables for nuclear projects are mainly instrumentation and control cables but a very specific

requirement from clients is to address radiation issues. So MESC is doing advanced R&D on producing such cables so that they can be a part of a nuclear power plant in Saudi Arabia, he noted.

Transportation is another sector that MESC is involved in a big way in Saudi Arabia, being part of all major projects like Haramain High Speed Rail and Riyadh Metro for signalling cables. "We are already manufacturing such cables, and have global certifications from VDE Germany, which can be sold anywhere worldwide."

Besides working on all major Saudi Aramco projects, the company has recently secured a supply contract with the Kuwait National Petroleum Company's (KNPC) new refinery for instrumentation and control cables for the main processing unit.

Even as the company continues to procure contracts, the Middle East's economic downturn has had a major impact on the business of MESC. And Mr Salama's first job after his appointment as a V-P in October 2015 was to restructure the sales and marketing organisation, to be "customer centric", and better serve MESC customers.

"I have created a new sales support organisation, which handles all after sales-related issues so that our sales team can focus more on the customers. We also have an R&D centre in Saudi Arabia with an extended support team in Ras Al Khaimah, UAE."

Mr Salama reiterated that MESC's strategy will continue to focus on oil and gas, while expanding its cabling business for other industries, and further geographies beyond the MENA region.

Advancing women in the oil and gas workforce

THE ADIPEC WOMEN in Energy conference, held on the closing day of ADIPEC, highlighted the growing importance of women in the oil and gas workforce, with participation from leading industry role models.

More than 200 delegates attended the event, which featured a full day of discussions aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion within the global oil and gas industry. It focused on the contribution women are making in the industry, both in terms of how women can be further empowered towards achieving their career ambitions, and by offering space for women to share their own professional expertise with their peers.

Speakers included women working at several international and local companies, including Petronas, Lukoil, Nova Chemicals and Tatweer Petroleum, sharing their knowledge and experience, and exploring strategies for promoting diversity across the board.

In the conference's keynote address, Marcelle M. Wahba, former US ambassador to the UAE, and now president of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, said many industries continued to have a built-in bias that men were better suited to certain roles.

"This is the glass ceiling that women contend with in male dominated professions or industries," Wahba said. "When it comes to glass ceilings, I understand that there's none tougher to crack than the one that women face in the oil and gas industry."

Women in Energy includes an emphasis on supporting a new generation of female



Speakers at the ADIPEC Women in Energy Conference

Image Credit : Wealis

professionals seeking careers in scientific or technical roles.

Research by the Boston Consulting Group, for the World Petroleum Council, has found that fewer than a fifth of oil and gas workers are female. The disparity is particularly acute in offshore and marine, refining, and petrochemicals, in which women hold just 15 per cent of entry-level technical and field positions. By comparison, female graduates hold half of entry-level office and business-support positions.

"While the number of women enrolling in the science and technology programmes at university level is very high, the number of women entering the STEM workforce is not accelerating at the same pace," commented Wahba. "Some social stigmas and stereotyped gender roles persist, and

those jobs are often viewed as more demanding or more dangerous. That's true not only in the UAE, it's also true in other countries, in Europe and in the United States."

While noting that the glass ceiling is faced by women worldwide, Wahba added that it is cracking, and praised the UAE for its commitment to expanding the role of women in both business and government.

"The UAE leadership has for decades championed women's issues from education to employment, and everything in between," she said. "The progress is very visible, and also quite unique, not only for this part of the world, but globally. I believe the role of women in the UAE demonstrates the progressive vision of this society and its leaders."