



**ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEE:**  
Olof Arnman, general manager of KSA operations for McDermott.

## McDermott

This month, we put McDermott in the hot seat for a quick-fire round of questions about its expansion in Saudi Arabia

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### Tell me about the SAFIRA project.

The SAFIRA project is about developing a new McDermott fabrication yard in Ras Al Khair on the east coast of Saudi Arabia. When fully built up, The SAFIRA yard will have a footprint of approximately 1.2mn sqm, with an expected peak throughput capacity of around 85,000 metric tonnes per year. The significance of it is, of course, that while McDermott has worked in Saudi Arabia, and worked with Saudi Aramco as a key client globally for more than five decades, we are making a strategic move in support of IKTV and Saudi Vision 2030, by localizing a full-scale fabrication facility to be able to service projects for Aramco from within Saudi Arabia.

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### What is the wider impact of building this fabrication yard in Saudi Arabia?

In connection with the SAFIRA fabrication yard, we are also significantly expanding our in-Kingdom engineering and procurement capabilities and building up full project execution capabilities in Saudi Arabia. When the yard opens in the third quarter of 2022, we will be able to fully manage and execute projects from our offices and facilities in the Kingdom, from engineering to fabrication and installation. We expect that this will contribute significantly to the development of the local supply chain, which fits very well with the Saudi Government's focus on localizing industries and diversifying the economy.

**"WE ARE MAKING A STRATEGIC MOVE... BY LOCALIZING A FULL-SCALE FABRICATION FACILITY TO BE ABLE TO SERVICE PROJECTS FOR ARAMCO FROM WITHIN SAUDI ARABIA."**

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### You have mentioned leveraging and developing the local supply chain and talent pool; is McDermott similarly working to develop women in the field?

This subject is something that is high on the agenda for McDermott and if you look at the many positive initiatives being launched recently by Saudi Aramco and the Saudi Government, to facilitate hiring and development of women in the oil and gas industry, it is very encouraging. For example, we are now liaising with the Leading National Academy, LNA, an all-female vocational training school, for 2-year training programs in the fields of HSE and quality control, among others. We also see more and more female engineers in our industry and if we look at our graduate development program intake this year, about half of our new candidates are women.

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### Developing the local supply chain is indeed a huge priority for Saudi Arabia and Saudi Aramco, but how are you focusing on local talent?

Once in operation, the SAFIRA yard will create almost 7,000 direct jobs in Saudi Arabia and numerous indirect opportunities for the local workforce and supply chain. We will continuously work with local train-

ing schools like SPSP and others to develop young Saudi nationals and stay with them from training until they can join our workforce as skilled craftsmen. We are also working with KFUPM and other universities to source candidates for our Graduate Development Program, which is devoted to develop newly graduated Saudi engineers through a two year fast-track program.

### Plenty of oil and gas companies from across verticals are setting up operations in KSA to boost localisation. How do you differentiate SAFIRA from other projects in the kingdom?

SAFIRA will be the only EPC fabrication yard of its kind in Saudi Arabia. We are building a brand new facility and investing in new technologies such as digitalization and robotics, to ensure that this will be a modern yard built to the highest standards of safety, quality and efficiency. Through this investment, McDermott will reposition itself as the only international EPC contractor with the capability to fully execute projects in-Kingdom.

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