

AIST Global Development: Middle East and North Africa

When you join the steel industry, you sign up not only for a career, but a membership in a truly dynamic and vibrant global community of steelmakers. Indeed, you can find AIST members all the way from Melbourne, Australia, to Stockholm, Sweden, and from Seoul, South Korea, to São Paulo, Brazil.

And soon, we hope, you'll find many more of them in places like Abu Dhabi, UAE, and Cairo, Egypt.

As we report below, AIST is launching an effort to bring formal programming to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), with an eye to eventually establishing a new Member Chapter for the region. Our first offering will be the MENA Steel Forum, which is set for November.

AIST currently counts 30 members across 25 MENA region countries. They are a small portion of our overall membership, but they recognize the value that comes with access to AIST's networking events and educational programs, and their numbers are poised to grow.

That's especially so as Middle Eastern and North African producers grow in technical sophistication and process efficiency.

MENA countries together produce more than 50 million metric tons of crude steel each year, mostly in the form of construction-grade long products, such as rebar. However, the region is responsible for more than half of the world's supplemental iron production and last year made 50.1 million metric tons of direct reduced iron and hot briquetted iron.

We believe there is a great opportunity here for additional knowledge sharing and networking. AIST is a global organization in scope, but in scale, it is local – our strength is measured by our Member Chapters, each contributing to our collective know-how.

It takes persistence and patience to develop high-quality, regionally relevant programming, but we believe the investment is well worth it, and, in the end, will only strengthen our global network.

History

Inspiration for the MENA Chapter originated during AISTech 2017 in Nashville, Tenn., USA. New member Mohamed Saied, Level 2 Automation Manager, EZDK Steel, attended the conference – his first AIST event. Saied was impressed by the quality technical content that was presented as well as the event's high level of organization and professionalism. At that time, he envisioned that if such an event could exist in his region, it would greatly benefit networking and professional development for the steel industry in the Middle East and North Africa. As a result of his persistence and connections made at the AISTech, preliminary discussions of the concept were initiated.

Saied was so inspired from his initial experience at AISTech that he returned the following year to attend AISTech 2018 in Philadelphia, Pa., USA. Recognizing the extraordinary technological expertise and resources that AIST provides, he was determined to gain momentum for development of some outreach programming for the MENA region.

The first planning teleconference took place on 20 December 2018. Five AIST members participated in the

first call. The steering committee identified the Middle East as a growing market, with new engineers eager for technical information. The steel producers in the MENA region were aware of AIST's global brand recognition, as well as the valuable training and vast technical resources that AIST offers. A survey was released to steel producers in the MENA region to determine what technical subjects would be of interest from which to develop programming.

The survey results reinforced the desire for technical training, with focus on new technology, modern furnace operations and EAF efficiency, cost savings, and digital transformation. The steering committee continued to conduct regular teleconferences and focused its efforts toward establishing the first AIST event in the MENA region.

The MENA steering committee reconvened at AISTech 2019 in Pittsburgh, Pa., USA, to identify the programming needs and opportunities for AIST to





AIST MENA Region (as of 9 September 2020)

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| - Afghanistan | - Morocco |
| - Algeria | - Oman |
| - Armenia | - Pakistan |
| - Azerbaijan | - Palestine |
| - Bahrain | - Qatar |
| - Djibouti | - Saudi Arabia |
| - Egypt | - Somalia |
| - Iraq | - Sudan |
| - Jordan | - Tunisia |
| - Kuwait | - Turkey |
| - Lebanon | - United Arab Emirates (UAE) |
| - Libya | - Yemen |
| - Mauritania | |

establish a presence in the MENA region. The primary objective of the meeting was to outline the format for a conference to be held in the Middle East and consider additional future programming options, including Technology Training Conferences and International Study Tours.

MENA Steel Forum

Through discussions with the MENA steering committee, AIST planned to conduct an in-person AIST Steel Forum in Cairo, Egypt, in September 2020. The AIST Steel Forum program, first conducted in Italy in 2012, is intended to complement regional steel programming, while fulfilling AIST's mission to advance steel technology through education and the creation of important peer networks for our industry. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the AIST MENA Steel Forum will transition to a virtual event scheduled to be held 10–12 November 2020.

The event will span 2.5 days and include a variety of sessions mixing business issues with technical presentations and panel discussions. Of the five sessions, one will be held in Arabic and all others in English. The program content has been developed by the 11 members of the steering committee comprised of representatives from regional steel facilities and suppliers and is based on the survey of industry topics.

AIST has secured The Steel Network as a media partner for the 2020 MENA Steel Forum to promote the event locally. The Steel Network has been in operation for 10 years and is the largest association in the steel industry with Arabic content. Its more than 5,000 subscribers encompass 22 Arabic countries. The partnership with The Steel Network supports the AIST brand in a region where we have limited presence.

It is anticipated that with a successful inaugural event, AIST will hold annual programming with the long-term goal of establishing an AIST MENA Member Chapter. ♦

Members of the AIST MENA Steering Committee

Mohamed Saied

Level 2 Automation Manager, EZDK Steel

Ashraf Hanna

Director Primary Metallurgy, RHI Magnesita Canada

Karim Alshurafa

General Manager – Sales and Marketing, SMS group Inc.

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Mohamed Hamdy Farahat

Maintenance Executive Manager, EZZ Steel

Reda Fayez

Plant Manager, Kandil Steel

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Managing Director, EZZ Steel

To register for or sponsor the
AIST MENA Steel Forum, please visit AIST.org.