

2025 MENA Steel Forum Recap



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With the rich history of The Great Pyramids of Giza as the backdrop, the AIST Middle East North Africa Member Chapter hosted its second in-person MENA Steel Forum at the Marriott Mena House, Cairo, in Cairo, Egypt. The biennial conference was held 24–26 June 2025, hosting 227 attendees from 22 countries.

The forum gathered regional and international leaders from the steel sector to explore innovations, sustainability and strategic direction for the future of steel manufacturing, with a special focus on the MENA region. The two-and-a-half-day event featured keynote addresses, technical presentations, panel discussions, and success stories that emphasized collaboration between industry, academia, and technology providers.



▲ Gamil Iskander, Ezz Steel, gave the keynote presentation (L–R): AIST executive director Ron Ashburn; Iskander; AIST MENA Member Chapter chair Karim Badr, RHI Magnesita; AIST MENA Member Chapter vice chair Karim Alshurafa, Vollmer America Inc.



▲ Technological Advancements and Innovation in Steel Manufacturing panel (L–R): Paolo Stagnoli, Tenova S.p.A.; Enea Paquali, SMS group; Kyle Morgan, The Systems Group; Mostafa Khamis, Danieli Group; and Dogan Ertaş, GEMKOM MAKINA.

"I truly appreciated the opportunity to attend the 2025 MENA Steel Forum. The sessions were insightful and covered a wide range of important topics in the steel industry."

— MENA Steel Forum Attendee

Chapter chair Karim Badr, technical director – ironmaking, RHI Magnesita, and vice chair Karim Alshurafa, president, Vollmer America Inc., opened the forum with an overview of AIST and highlighted the importance of regional collaboration and innovation.

Keynote speaker Gamil Iskander, projects director at Ezz Steel, shared his insights with the audience into the future of steel rebar technology, underscoring its crucial role in Egypt's infrastructure development.

AIST executive director Ron Ashburn addressed global market challenges, including oversupply and protectionism, and how these factors may shape the industry's future. Ashburn then held a conversation with industry executives Rafic Daou, vice chairman and chief executive officer, Suez Steel Co. SAE; and Rolando Paolone, board member, ABS – Acciaierie Bertoli Safau S.p.A., who shared their perspectives on navigating regional steel market dynamics amid geopolitical uncertainties and fluctuating energy costs.



▲ Regional Steel Perspectives panel (L–R): Rafic Daou, Suez Steel Co. SAE, and Rolando Paolone, ABS – Acciaierie Bertoli Safau S.p.A.



▲ Sustainability Endeavors in Steelmaking, Refractory and Graphite Electrodes panel (L–R): Said Alameddine, ALTech Group; Javier Castiñeira, Resonac; Moataz El Kelany, Ezz Steel; Miriam Schnalzger, RHI Magnesita; Alexander Laugier-Werth, Vesuvius; and Mauro Bianchi Ferri, Acciarium Alliance .

After a networking lunch, attendees explored technological innovations driving steel manufacturing moderated by Ashraf Hanna, vice president of steelmaking solutions and services, MeltTech Solutions Inc. This session highlighted advancements in automation, digitalization, and emissions reduction led by industry experts from Tenova, SMS group, The Systems Group, Danieli Group, and GEMKOM MAKINA, showcasing how these technologies enhance sustainability and competitiveness within the sector.

The day concluded with a deep dive into green steel initiatives, with discussions moderated by Karim Badr. Presenters from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, Midrex, Tenova HYL, SMS group,

and EMSTEEL focused on the pivotal role of hydrogen-based direct reduction and carbon capture technologies in reducing emissions and meeting international climate commitments.

“The conference is an important event that enriches the knowledge of all aspects and trends related to the steel industry and helps bringing the experts and decision-makers from around the world together in one place. Excellent job.”

— MENA Steel Forum Attendee



▲ Insights From Technology Providers, Users and Analysis in Green Steel panel (L–R): Fabio Muscolino, SMS group; Soroush Basirat, Institute for Energy and Financial Analysis Australia; Karim Badr; Manal Al Badawi, EMSTEEL Group; and Leonardo Tamez, Tenova HYL.



▲ Academia and Industry Shaping the Future of the Steel Industry panel (L–R): Mohamed Fouad Emam, Ezz Steel; Amr Eltawil, Egypt Japan University of Science and Technology; Hadia Hamdy, Universities of Canada in Egypt; Wael Omar, Siemens; Taher Salah El-Din, Ezz Steel; and Iman El-Mahallawi, The British University in Egypt

Day two of the technical program opened with a session that explored eco-conscious practices in refractory and electrode production. Moderated by Mauro Bianchi Ferri, managing director, Acciarium Alliance, representatives from ALTech Group, Resonac, RHI Magnesita, Ezz Steel, and Vesuvius emphasized sustainable sourcing and emissions mitigation.

A dedicated session organized by Iman El-Mahallawi, professor, Mechanical Engineering Department, founding director of Centre for Renewable Energy, academic leader of Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing Group, The British University in Egypt, brought together scholars, engineers, and young professionals to discuss sustainability, material performance, and advanced manufacturing.

Presentations from young engineering professionals highlighted sustainability initiatives and advanced steel manufacturing techniques, fostering a collaborative environment that bridged the gap between theory and practice.

The session continued with a diverse panel moderated by Taher Salah El-Din, corporate technical affairs – technical development director, Ezz Steel, featuring participants from Ezz Steel, Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology, Universities of Canada in Egypt, and Siemens.



▲ Stepping Into the Future: Case Studies and Success Stories in Technology Adoption panel (L–R): Osama Azab, Egyptian Steel; Oussama Bellah, Algerian Qatari Steel; Ali El-Keshawy, UNICAT Catalyst Technologies; Mostafa Rashad, El Marakby Steel Co.; Robert Sorger, RHI Magnesita; and Karim Alshurafa, Vollmer America Inc.



Attendees of the 2025 MENA Steel Forum had the opportunity to tour Ezz Steel, Sadat City.

The technical conference wrapped up with an engaging session showcasing real-world case studies from steel producers, focusing on successful technological adoption and operational enhancements. Moderated by Karim Alshurafa, speakers from Egyptian Steel, Algerian Qatari Steel, UNICAT, El Marakby Steel, and RHI Magnesita shared valuable experiences related to automation and process innovations that demonstrated the tangible benefits of embracing change in an evolving industry.

The forum concluded on Thursday, 26 June, with a plant tour of Ezz Steel, Sadat City. The plant graciously welcomed the attendees and provided an informational tour of their facility.

The AIST MENA Steel Forum 2025 served as a pivotal platform for knowledge exchange and strategic dialogue and industry collaboration.

The chapter would like to thank the event host Ezz Steel, as well as the sponsors, participants and attendees for their contributions to the success of this year's forum.

Event Host



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