

market. It has lately bought the production sharing agreement rights for Al Shaer and Sharifeh gas fields near Palmyra from Marathon. It has also bid for 6 blocks in the most recent bidding round issued in December 2004 by the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources. Shell has also bid for 2 blocks in the same bidding round. Other bidders were: Global Oil & Energy Limited and Gulf Keystone Petroleum Limited, Gulf Petroleum Ltd, Hunt Middle East, Story Trans Gas Maurel & Prom, ST Power Systems Inc, Markmore Energy Limited, Ukrnadra Service, Loon Energy Inc and the consortium of GSPC-Jepel-alkor. Results are expected to be announced late 2006.

Offshore exploration is also moving forward. The Norwegian company Inseis Terra has carried out seismic survey work in a 5000 square kilometre area off the Mediterranean coast, which incorporates the Latakia trough and the Levant basin. It plans to hold a conference in London for marketing the seismic data after completing the interpretation, which is expected this year.

This busy exploration and production scene will definitely create more business opportunities for UK companies in supplies, services and training. For example, contracts for the supply of Casing and Tubing from the UK amounting to about US\$ 8m were signed over the last two months. The UK company Tri-star, which provides training services, has also concluded contracts with a number of oil & gas companies to provide training to their staff.

UK companies' interest in the Syrian oil & gas market is clearly increasing. This was demonstrated by the presence of 21 UK businessmen representing 15 UK companies at the major local oil & gas exhibition, Syroil 2006, held in Damascus from 3-6 April. Syroil 2006 was certainly the busiest event since its launch in 1998.

Our UK Trade & Investment team at the British Embassy in Damascus had a catalogue and information stand at Syroil 2006. Thanks to the organisers Allied Expo who offered the section 12 sqm free stand, as usual. We had the



H.E. Eng. Sufian Allaw, Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources at the British Embassy stand at Syroil, Damascus 3-6 April 2006

opportunity to see our existing customers and get to know new ones.

The UK companies with a presence at the show included: Airblast, Anson, Barton, Crowcon, Dormer Tools International, Elcometer, Fidgeon Limited, Gulf sands, Hi-Force Limited, HOH Oilfield Service Limited, In-pipe, Iprmel, Irwin Industrial Tools, Jet-Lobe, Kerr Fire Fitting Chemicals, Oxford Instruments Analytical Oy, PTI Technologies Limited, Silverwing (UK) Limited, Smith International (North Sea Limited), STOPAQ Europe BV, Target Well Control, Tri-Star Middle East Training Services and TWI.

If any UK companies want advice or assistance about the Syrian Oil & Gas sector, please contact me at fadwa.soud@fco.gov.uk. UK companies can also visit the UKTI website www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk where we place information on tenders issued by the local oil & gas companies. At the same time we advise Syrian companies to contact us for information on the UK oil & gas industry and the suppliers of equipment and services. We would always be pleased to help.