



Above: MEA Trade Mission visitors pose with the UKTI Team from the Embassy in Riyadh on 11 Nov '08

sponsorship of the British Offset Office we run two missions a year to the Kingdom, led by David Lloyd, a former member of HM Diplomatic Service with five years experience of living and working in Eastern Province. These missions, which are generously sponsored by the British Offset Office, usually attract at least 20 participants and introduce many new companies to the market.

In view of the importance of Saudi Arabia and the other GCC countries, we are looking to establishing an MEA office in Abu Dhabi, which will replicate the work of the MEA in the GCC and assist British companies in developing their business with the UAE and the wider region.

The MEA is becoming increasingly sector focused – the financial services sector and the education and

skills sector are priorities. Our City and the GCC Countries Conference, now in its third year, is recognised as the premier event for promoting financial cooperation between the City of London and the GCC countries. This year's event, held on 19 June and organised in cooperation with the City of London Corporation, attracted an unprecedented level of support from across the GCC region.

Our focus on the education and skills sector reflects urgency of the need to bridge the skills gap in the region. With the London Business School we held a major conference on 'Meeting the skills needs in the Middle East and North Africa' in July, which highlighted the potential for further co-operation in this area, and we are now developing a programme of education and training missions and roundtables throughout the region. Education and training is of course a key focus of development in Saudi Arabia, and this sector is well represented on our trade missions to the Kingdom.

For further information about the Association, and our activities, please contact Rakesh Ramchurn, tel: +44 (0)20 7839 2137, email: rakesh@the-mea.co.uk, or visit our website, www.the-mea.co.uk. Do come and see us when you are in the UK. We look forward to further strengthening our relations with the RGBB, which does such valuable work in promoting British business and serving the British business community in the Kingdom.


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