

Exciting Win for Glasgow

Major petrochemicals plant in Saudi Arabia



The FWEL/Gulf Farabi (GF) management team. Seated: Steve Davies (left), director, regional operations, FWEL; M I Al-Bibi, president, GF. Standing: Bernard Carlin (left), project manager, FWEL; Dr P V S Namboothiri, senior business development manager (4th left), GF; Ian Donnelly (4th right), general manager, FWEL Glasgow Operations; Charles Sweeney (2nd right), business development director, FWEL.

Gulf Farabi Petrochemicals Company Limited have appointed Foster Wheeler Glasgow Operations as project management contractor (PMC) for their n-paraffin and linear alkyl benzene (LAB) project to be built in Al-Jubail, Saudi Arabia.

The \$250 million grassroots plant will produce 120,000 metric tonnes per annum of n-paraffin and 70,000 metric tonnes per annum of LAB. This project will enable Gulf Farabi to meet growing local (Middle Eastern) and worldwide demand for LAB while also supplying n-paraffin as feedstock to other LAB producers. LAB is the key raw material used in the manufacture of one of the most widely used surfactants in household detergents. A feedstock agreement has been signed between Gulf Farabi and Saudi Aramco Shell Refinery Company. The land has been allotted by Royal Commission to build the unit adjacent to the existing SASREF Refinery.

During phase 1, the definition phase, Foster Wheeler will develop the project specification

from UOP design packages, prepare the environmental information report, issue invitations to bid for the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contract and make the EPC award recommendation. Additionally, in conjunction with its In-Kingdom partner, Gulf Radicon Consult, Foster Wheeler will prepare the design specification for the utilities and offsite services along with processing of local approvals and permits. Phase 1 is scheduled to be completed at the end of 2002.

Foster Wheeler will manage the project through phase 2, the EPC phase, and will also provide construction management services and commissioning assistance through to the successful production of n-paraffin and LAB.

The schedule is challenging: 35 months from the start of the definition phase through the EPC and commissioning phases. During phase 1, the Foster Wheeler team, led by Bernard Carlin, project manager, will be based in Glasgow. Other key team members include Alan McDougall, leading the process effort, John Borthwick, engineering manager, and Nigel King, commercial manager. Gulf Farabi plans to have resident representatives in Glasgow during this phase. Kick-off meetings have already been held in Saudi Arabia, Glasgow and Des Plaines, (USA). The process flow diagram review was completed on schedule in May 2002.

For phase 2, the PMC support team will relocate to the EPC contractor's design office and finally to site at Al-Jubail.

This new plant represents Gulf Farabi's first venture into downstream development of petrochemicals and fits into the company's business plan to expand its portfolio into the petrochemical market. Foster Wheeler hopes to have the opportunity to support the future projects planned by Gulf Farabi and other future projects in Saudi Arabia by private investors.

This project will not only strengthen Glasgow's PMC capability, but will also build upon their Saudi Arabian experience, gained working with Reading and Saudi Aramco on the Rabigh, Haradh and Qatif projects.