

Fugro Enters into Marine Technology Partnership in Saudi Arabia



Fugro's new partnership with KAUST ([King Abdullah University of Science and Technology](#)) was marked recently with the inauguration of the KAUST – Fugro Center of Excellence for Marine Technology. Beginning a mutually beneficial partnership, the new centre will provide training in ROV operations and hydrographic survey within the Kingdom as part of the Saudisation programme.

KAUST's facilities and location, on the shore of the Red Sea, are ideal for addressing the challenges associated with mapping the Red Sea, large tracts of which remain unexplored due to extreme depths, temperature and salinity. "This close working relationship with Fugro will greatly increase KAUST's capabilities in marine research, enabling access to the extreme environments of the Red Sea and advancing the development of subsea

research technologies," explained Jean M.J. Fréchet, KAUST's senior vice president for Research, Innovation and Economic Development. "The Red Sea is of great importance to Saudi Arabia's economy, and we need to further our understanding of its resource-rich environment for the benefit of the Kingdom."

ROV Training Academy

Extreme environments demand cutting-edge technology and trained professionals, and Fugro will provide these, together with access to its most advanced technologies, enabling the collection of data and samples from previously inaccessible sites. It will also establish an ROV Training Academy (ROVTA) at the [KAUST Coastal and Marine Resources Core Lab](#). At this academy, the only such facility in the Kingdom, Fugro will train Saudi students to become ROV pilots and engineers for work in both industry and marine research. Support from Fugro's ROVTA in Abu Dhabi will bring the highest standard of training and technology to the region to sustain new developments in the Red Sea and surrounding areas.

"Fugro is pleased to form this innovative partnership with KAUST, building on our past 40 years of operations in Saudi Arabia. Our hydrographic survey teams have conducted extensive seabed mapping programmes in the Red Sea over the last decade and we look forward to training and developing more Saudi students, enabling them to enter this exciting field of discovery," added Mark Heine, director of Fugro's Marine Division.

The KAUST - Fugro alliance will place Saudi Arabia at the forefront of international scientific advancements in marine technology whilst the new Center of Excellence will not only benefit the KAUST academic community, but will also support the university's industrial partners and bolster Fugro's future technological innovations.