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Saudi Arabia : Creation a National Training Center for Water Professions

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In order to meet the needs generated by the high growth of its industrial and agricultural sectors, but also for better accompanying the quick development of its main cities, linked to high demographic growth, even to the creation of several new cities such as the King Abdullaziz Economic City (KAEC), the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia decided to implement a new water policy, voluntarily centered on a vision of sustainable development, quality of provided services and resources protection.

Owing to this ambitious strategy, the Ministry of Water and Electricity (MoWE) is developing new methods for the management of the drinking water supply and sanitation utilities of the bigger cities (Riyadh, Jeddah, Mecca, etc), which will be entrusted to private operators after international invitations to tender.

One of the significant innovations is also the transfer of most MoWE responsibilities to the National Water Company (NWC), created by royal decree for this purpose.

To support this approach, MoWE drafted a proactive and demanding strategy for the professionalization of the personnel working in the water sector.

One of the pillars of this strategy is the decision made by MoWE to create a Training Center for Water Professions in Riyadh, meeting excellence criteria equivalent to the best world practices.

The Consortium, made up by BRGM, the **International Office for Water** and the Saudi partner Abunayyan Trading Corporation, won the invitation to tender for carrying out a feasibility study for this Training Center.

This study, which started in April, was completed in October 2007 and the obtained results were presented during several workshops with MoWE.

In addition to the definition of the technical and educational components of this future Center, planned for training about 13,000 to 15,000 staff members of the sector, an architectural project was developed and management and investment methods were identified.

In order to meet the terms of reference wished for by the Saudi Ministry, the future Center was designed to receive all the facilities and resources (research center, documentation center, resource center, laboratories, full-scale training units, pilot treatment units, auditorium, lodgings and restaurant, etc) for achieving its objectives.

The selected building site is located in the Salbukh catchment area, at about 40 km North-East of Riyadh.

Finally, the Saudis in charge wish to orientate the development of these Training Center activities towards a dynamics of broad international cooperation on the regional scale.