

# **AL DELMA**

## **GENERAL CONTRACTING & TRAINING SERVICES**

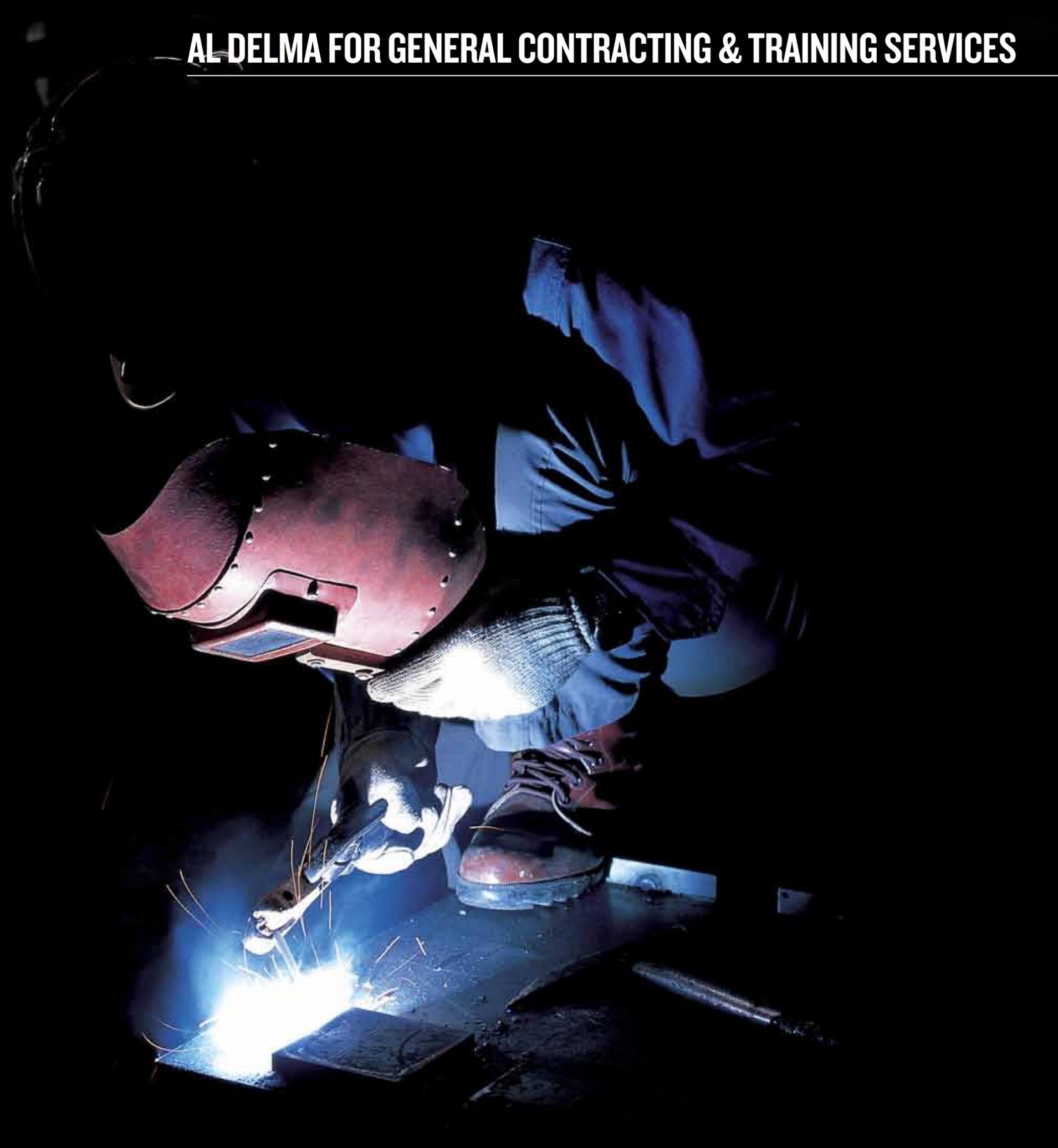
### **TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE**



# TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

*Chairman, Dr Sarmed Nima, discusses how Al Delma for General Contracting & Training Services is best placed to create a skilled local workforce in Iraq*

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According to numerous geological surveys and available seismic data, the country of Iraq possesses what might well be one of the largest collections of oil reserves on the planet, estimated to total over 350 billion barrels. However decades of sanctions, two Gulf Wars and the subsequent years of civil unrest left its oil infrastructure in dire need of modernisation and investment. Despite a growing international effort to transform Iraq's oil industry for the better, there are still considerable skills gaps that need filling before the country can truly profit from what its land has to offer.

A 100 percent Iraqi owned company, established in 2006, Al Delma for General Contracting & Training Services aims to contribute to the re-building of Iraq into a stronger player on the international stage. Boasting a national footprint, Al Delma prides itself on its consistent level of service and ability to offer qualified personnel, plans and its accurate implementation of projects.

"In the aftermath of the second Gulf War in 2003," explains chairman, Dr Sarmed Nima, "companies slowly began to return to Iraq. It was at this time that we took it upon ourselves to establish a business that would specialise in providing skills and training."

Having worked for Iraq's Ministry of Oil until 1999, and extensively within the private sector in the years after, Nima believes his true calling in life has always been in the field of petroleum engineering. It is his knowledge of, and experience within,

A man wearing a blue hard hat, safety glasses, and blue gloves is working on a complex metal structure, likely part of a scaffolding system. He is focused on his task, adjusting a component of the structure. The background shows more of the industrial setting with various pipes and structural elements.

Training with scaffolding structures for use to support people and materials

the country's oil sector that helped him to recognise the market's need for professional training services.

"We began by providing English learning training," Nima continues, "and have since advanced into providing core skills training, for example professional administration and managerial skills, and financial training. Now we are also beginning to branch out into providing specialist technical training from our facility in Basra."

A prime example of this training would be in the field of welding, a hugely important service required by the vast majority, if not all, of the companies working in Iraq. "There is a distinct lack of professional services available in certain areas of Iraq's oil industry," Nima says, "and welding is one of them. What we have introduced is a step-by-step training programme, complete with ready-to-use simulators, that teaches people how to weld and do so professionally."

This approach has since been extended to other disciplines such as scaffolding, working with chemicals, explosives and hazardous materials, and working in confined spaces. Courses that Al Delma currently has in development include those aimed at petroleum engineering, such as the production of reservoirs and



Awareness training in confined spaces is essential for a successful oil & gas HSE

drilling, and health and safety.

"Other areas of business that we are looking to venture into," Nima states, "are construction and procurement. Procurement activities in particular in Iraq tend not to be carried out to the standards that international companies expect and this is something we want to remedy. I personally have been responsible for executing more than 160 different procurement contracts during

**"AL DELMA AIMS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE RE-BUILDING OF IRAQ INTO A STRONGER PLAYER ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE"**

my career and I now want to transfer my knowledge and understanding on to others through our training programmes. In a move that we hope will be take these plans a step further, I have recently been in Canada working to form partnerships with those companies that are keen to establish a presence within Iraq with the aim being to introduce their products and services into the country."

One of the challenges that Al Delma has to continually work to overcome is its perception by some as being a little more than a local Iraqi business. "This



Al Delma has state of the art training facilities

perception of our company," Nima says, "also comes with the preconception that for whatever reason our standards are lower than they should be. This couldn't be further from the truth. In fact, performance wise, we excel where many others fail."

**350  
BILLION**

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**Iraq's estimated  
oil reserves**

Common issues that plight those failing companies include acquiring visas for Iraqis and handling the complex logistical challenges that the environment creates. Equally crucial to success is simply being able to have a firm understanding of the culture of Iraq and how this impacts upon the type of workers the country



Knowledge and simulation is key to qualify as a professional welder



Technicians train in real maintenance workshops



On job training builds confidence

## “AL DELMA BELIEVES THAT ALL INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES SHOULD BE COMMITTED TO UPGRADING THE STANDARDS OF THEIR IRAQI PERSONNEL”

breeds. “This is where being a locally based company really benefits us,” Nima enthuses. “By having a clear understanding of the environment in which we operate we are best placed to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with international companies as they attempt to establish themselves in this part of the world.”

It is Nima’s opinion that the company has

developed hugely in recent years, becoming much more organised while maintaining its commitment to improving its capabilities further. By doing so, Al Delma gives itself a better edge over its competition when it comes to attracting the interest of international partners.

Having this edge appears all the more important when you take a closer look at

what the immediate future for Iraq has in store. “In all our discussions with the likes of BP, Shell, Lukoil and other major international players based in the country,” Nima says, “what we have found is that they all agree that training is one of their most pressing concerns and requirements. What you must remember is that since 1980, for all intents and purposes, until very recently Iraq has remained disconnected from the world. This has created an issue where most of the local population are not educated or skilled enough to make this happen in this industry.”

What Al Delma believes is that all the aforementioned companies have a commitment to upgrading the standards of

their Iraqi personnel and they want them to know that the company is on hand to deliver the core skills they need. “It is my opinion,” Nima concludes, “that if Iraq’s oil industry is to reach its proposed target of producing ten million barrels of oil per day, then it will need a trained workforce of at least 70,000 Iraqis. This gives us great confidence that the market for training in Iraq will increase as the industry grows, and as this occurs we will do what we need to do in order to grow as well.” **BE**

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