

Safety and security in the Gulf

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Consistently rated as one of America's most innovative and admired corporations, 3M is a company of tremendous diversity in products, markets and technologies. Its brands include icons such as Scotch, Post-it, Scotchgard, Thinsulate, Scotch-Brite, Filtrete and Dyneon. The company operates across diverse business sectors, including consumer, electronics and energy, healthcare, industrial, and safety and graphics. This wide range of product categories enables 3M to cater to markets at different stages of economic growth and also offer solutions to country specific requirements, as underscored in the Gulf, an important growth market for 3M. Chaouki Bahsoun, General Manager, Safety and Graphics Business Group at 3M Gulf, outlines their operations and recent initiatives in this field, with a focus on 3M's Traffic Safety and Security Division (TSSD), Personal Safety Division (PSD), and Novec 1230 active fire protection systems.

From its founding in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1902, 3M has been at the forefront of technological revolutions and product innovations worldwide. Today, it manufactures and sells over 50,000 products in 200 countries worldwide, generating a turnover of \$30 billion in sales. The group employs about 88,000 people worldwide and has operations in more than 70 countries.

With innovation as the bedrock of its culture, the company brings about 500 new products to market every year. Fresh ideas, whether inspired by talks with customers or among colleagues, are regularly transformed into winning product solutions for customers. 3M also is often praised for the way it has successfully leveraged its global expansion strategy, enabling it to earn two-thirds of its revenues from

international operations. In the 2014 financial year, sales increased 3.1 percent to a record \$31.8 billion. The company believes in expanding and building a presence in global markets through localisation: it enters new international markets by exporting its products to that market. After establishing considerable presence, it focuses on localisation of the supply chain, and on identifying and developing products to cater to local requirements. For example, 3M sells biodegradable surgical drapes in Europe for its European customers and sells respirators in China that aid in protecting against air pollution. It offers solutions to congestion problems in India through products such as reflective stickers, pavement markers and sign sheets.

In the Gulf, 3M has been operating for more than three decades; the 3M Gulf subsidiary was founded in 1981, to be precise. The company has undergone extensive growth through the years, and now has a strong presence in offices, manufacturing plants, construction sites, hospitals, supercomputer centres, automotive body shops and households across the Gulf region. "Sectors such as healthcare, consumer and safety are of a core interest to us," says Mr. Bahsoun. "People in the Gulf, and in the rest of the world, will surely come across something related to 3M in their everyday life, whether it is a component in their smartphone, computer, protective equipment at work, or at home."

He adds that the Gulf region is a top priority market for 3M globally and that the company expects to grow there across all business sectors, in other





words not 'just' with its Mining, Oil and Gas Solutions business. The enormous investment currently going towards mega-infrastructure projects in the Gulf, from train stations to airports through to world cup stadiums in Qatar help create considerable opportunities for growth in the Middle East, also in safety, security and fire protection, the 3M business Mr. Bahsoun is responsible for. "Ensuring the safety of the blue collar worker has become an increasingly important issue in the Gulf," he points out, adding that in addition to offering a broad spectrum of personal safety products, 3M Gulf also organises safety seminars to increase awareness around worker safety issues. Underpinning its commitment to this

business in the region, 3M participated in the Intersec Exhibition, which was held at the World Trade Centre in Dubai at the start of this year. Intersec is renowned as the world's largest and most comprehensive trade and networking exhibition for the Security and Safety industries. The last edition in January 2015 featured 1,237 exhibitors and welcomed more than 25,000 visitors from 131 countries which made it the largest and most international trade fair for security and safety in the world.

3M was at this year's Intersec with its Traffic Safety and Security Division (TSSD), Personal Safety Division (PSD), and Novec 1230 active fire protection

systems all showcasing their solutions at the event. "The Safety and Graphics Business Group in the Gulf has a full portfolio of products, such as disposable and reusable respirators, passive hearing, and Peltor communications as part of hearing conservation, that can protect the people, either through the safety products or through the law enforcement using our most advanced and innovative security systems," explains Mr. Bahsoun. He adds that 3M Gulf also participates in Intersec to show its appreciation for local government initiatives around security and safety. "We want to thank the local government but also our many business partners in the region that allow us to do business here."



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