



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

8th GPCA Research and Innovation Conference to Arrive in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia This Week

The conference will take place at Le Méridien Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia, for the first time from 16-17 September 2026

Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia – 13 September 2026: The Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association (GPCA), the voice of the chemical industry in the Arabian Gulf, is proud to announce that the GPCA Research and Innovation Conference will return for its 8th edition, taking place for the first time in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 16-17 September 2026 at Le Méridien Al Khobar.

Held under the theme “Innovation that Delivers: Empowering Research and Talent for Tomorrow,” the event will provide delegates with a unique opportunity to explore how companies can embed innovation into their organizational culture, nurture talent for the future, and leverage emerging technologies to address industry challenges.

On Day 1, 16 September, Ahmad O. Al-Khowaiter, EVP – Technology & Innovation, Aramco, will deliver the opening plenary, while Dr. Majid Algwaiz, Deputy Minister of Development and Project Management, Ministry of Energy, Saudi Arabia, will deliver a ministerial address.

Dr. Waleed Al-Shalfan, VP for Corporate Sustainability, SABIC T&I, and Chairman, Research and Innovation Committee, GPCA, will present the welcome address, and Dr. Thorsten Loehl, VP – Science & Engineering, Borouge International, will deliver a keynote address on fostering innovation with purpose.

Mahdi Aladel, CEO, Aramco Ventures, will present a future walk-through titled “From Vision to Action: Powering the Innovation Playbook for the GCC’s Chemical Future”. A strategic panel discussion on transforming research into industrial impact will engage Dr. Afrah Aldawsari, GM - Refining and Petrochemical Technologies Institute, King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST); Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Farraj, General Manager of Corporate Technology, TASNEE; and Mohammad Essamuddin Ibrahim, GM, Research & Innovation, Sipchem.



Dr. Haleema Al-Amri, Senior Director of the Energy Innovation Observatory Department, Ministry of Energy, Saudi Arabia; Prof. Saad F. Alafnan, Chairman, Department of Chemical Engineering, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM); and Dr. Mohammed Al-Hazmi, GM, Chemicals, Technology & Innovation, SABIC, will participate in a leadership dialogue on cross-sector collaboration between industry, academia and government.

Day 2 of the conference will focus on the technologies, strategies, and intellectual capital that will shape the future of chemical innovation. The day will begin with a keynote address titled “Roadmap to the Future of Chemical Innovation: Lessons from Global Leaders” delivered by Dr. Alexandra Zakharova, Partner and KSA Chemicals Leader, McKinsey & Company. Building on this foundation, a strategic panel will explore how advanced computing capabilities and AI are revolutionizing scientific research.

Mater Aldhafeeri, Secretary General, GPCA, commented: “As the GCC’s chemical and petrochemical sector continues to evolve, world-class research, technology, academia, industry and talent will converge to accelerate the industry’s transformation. We are proud to announce the return of the GPCA Research and Innovation Conference to provide a valuable platform for dialogue, bringing together the region’s leading minds to share ideas, forge strategic partnerships, and shape the innovations that will define the industry’s future.”

To learn more about the conference program and secure your spot, visit: <https://gpcachem.org/conferences/ric/>

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About the Gulf Petrochemicals & Chemicals Association

The Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association (GPCA) was established in 2006 to represent the downstream hydrocarbon industry in the Arabian Gulf. Today, the association voices the common interests of more than 240 member companies from the chemical and allied industries, accounting for over 95 percent of chemical output in the GCC. The industry makes up the second largest manufacturing sector in the region, producing over USD 108 billion worth of products every year.

GPCA supports the petrochemical and chemical industry in the Arabian Gulf through advocacy, networking and thought leadership initiatives aimed at helping member companies to connect, share and advance knowledge, contribute to international dialogue, and become prime influencers in shaping the future of the global petrochemicals industry.

Committed to providing a regional platform for stakeholders from around the world, GPCA manages six working committees – Plastics, Supply Chain, Agri-Nutrients (Fertilizers), International Trade, Research and



Innovation, and Responsible Care – and organizes six world-class events each year. The association also publishes an annual report, regular newsletters and various other industry reports.

For more information, visit www.gpca.org.ae.

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