Japan Oil Development Co., Ltd. (JODCO), which is a subsidiary of INPEX Corporation, was established in 1973. Since then, the company has been involved in petroleum development projects for more than four decades in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This chapter explains JODCO’s petroleum development activities as well as other programs that have contributed to social and economic progress in Abu Dhabi. The UAE has the world’s seventh-largest crude oil reserves and also ranks seventh as a producer of crude oil. Japan views the UAE as an extremely important country because it is one of the Japan’s second-largest source of crude oil imports after Saudi Arabia.

### The History of JODCO’s Contributions to Progress in Abu Dhabi Through its Petroleum Development Operations

**JODCO’s Petroleum Development Operations in Abu Dhabi**

JODCO is involved in development and production operations in Abu Dhabi in partnership with the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) and other international oil companies. The activities are conducted at five offshore fields for oil production: Umm Shaif, Lower Zakum, Upper Zakum, Umm Al-Dalkh and Satah. We also conduct operations at Umm Lulu, where work is under way to start production, and at Nasr oil fields where we carry out development and production operations. All of these operations are conducted by the Abu Dhabi Marine Operating Company (ADMA-OPCO) for which we acquire capital and Zakum Development Company (ZADCO). We not only participate in operations as a shareholder of both companies, but we also contribute in various ways such as technological support, personnel, and information about the latest advances in development and production methods.

In 1978, after the joint development of the Umm Al-Dalkh Oil Field started with ADNOC, we played a leading role in launching the development of several new oil fields in the 1980s. These oil fields include the Upper Zakum Oil Field, which had enormous reserves but its tight reservoir characteristics made it difficult to develop, and the Satah Oil Field, which had high levels of hydrogen sulfide gas. Since the 1990s, we have performed a large technological study for ADMA-OPCO to provide technical assistance while other oil majors undertook the project. This study entailed conducting a geological survey (to clarify geological conditions) of a large offshore area of Abu Dhabi. This was a very challenging undertaking for a Japanese company at that time, but the results of this study was well received so this further increased the trust of the Abu Dhabi government in JODCO. In addition to providing this kind of technological support, we are playing a part in the economic growth of Abu Dhabi by sending personnel with technical knowledge and experience and by strengthening the management of operating companies.
ADMA-OPCO accounts for about 25% of all crude oil exports from Abu Dhabi, and almost all exports go to Eastern Asia. It is essential for job sites operating non-stop throughout the year, that all staff take initiative in their respective jobs and encourage others to do their best. It is important to foster understanding between office and field personnel. I frequently meet people in field operations so we can share our views on issue awareness.

The current team members differ in nationalities and cultural backgrounds, but we are all using our respective strengths to create value, and as a team we have a good mix. Wells and other field operations require hard and steadfast work along with the ability to communicate with other workers, and I also think this is an excellent environment for acquiring technical expertise.

Working in ZADCO with the oil majors, which have advanced technologies to drill production wells, allowed me to gain in-depth technical, operational and organizational knowledge. It also helped me develop my communication skills. The team where I work consists of people from about 10 different countries. A multicultural workplace requires you to demonstrate your skills by concentrating on work while having a thorough understanding of your own strengths.

Social Contribution Programs that bridge Abu Dhabi and Japan

Requests for a wide range of social contributions are often received from Abu Dhabi, and we strive to meet their needs sincerely on every occasion. We believe that this approach, including social contribution programs, works as a bridge and builds a solid foundation of trust between both countries.

One illustration is technical assistance for pearl farms. Before the oil industry was developed, exporting natural pearls had been the major industry in Abu Dhabi. After the Great Depression, Japanese cultured pearls were broadly marketed, the price of natural pearl crushed and the natural pearl industry dwindled. In 2006, the Environmental Agency — Abu Dhabi (EAD) requested assistance and support from us to restore the pearl industry using the Japanese techniques. Although we did not have the required knowledge or experience about the pearl industry, time and efforts were invested, fishing grounds from coast to coast in Japan were visited to respond to their request. Two Japanese expert engineers were sought and currently reside in the western coast of Abu Dhabi providing research and the technical support to local engineers. Working with the EAD, we will continue to support this project throughout its development as a major industry in the western region of Abu Dhabi.

We have many more social contribution programs; support for the Abu Dhabi Petroleum Institute’s (PI) solar car development project,
acceptance of UAE children to Japanese schools and kindergartens in Abu Dhabi, training in Japan for UAE University and PI students, and cultural exchanges through tea ceremony to name a few. We also contribute by implementing classes on developed countries, educational support to learn Japanese, cultural support and exchanges including disciplinary behavior, exchange programs, and programs about the inherited traditional culture. All activities are being conducted in accordance to the requests by the Abu Dhabi government, and they are the result of our considerations, coordination, and execution. We are confident that our contributions will facilitate the progress in Abu Dhabi for many years.

The government of Abu Dhabi has recognized for a long time the important role we have played in the country through our social contribution programs and the provision of engineers and other petroleum development professionals. As a result, the government decided to extend the expiration of our concession at the Upper Zakum Field for approx. 15 years from March 9, 2026 to December 31, 2041.

A Multi-cultural Operating Environment

In the massive energy projects of Abu Dhabi (UAE), one of the largest producers of oil and gas in the Middle East, people of many backgrounds with different languages and cultures work together. It is needless to say that our role in this environment is to make a contribution by using our technologies, but this is also an invaluable opportunity to gain teamwork experience of working with different cultures. As of March 1, 2014, there were 15 of our employees for technical support at ADMA-OPCO, 21 employees at ZADCO and one at Total ABK. In addition, our Abu Dhabi office staff includes 12 correspondents from Japan and 11 local staff, and the office accepts young employees from the INPEX Tokyo head office for training on office procedures every three months.

Doing business in a location with a different culture is not an easy task, but we believe that this is the business only we, who understand both Japan and Abu Dhabi, can operate. We will continue to cherish the existing sound relationship based on trust with Abu Dhabi in the future.

Dedicating to the Continuous fulfillment of a Safe Supply of Energy to Japan

The effort of everyone working diligently day after day in the multi-cultural workplace environments of energy-producing countries is the foundation of our mission, a stable and efficient supply of energy. To accomplish this mission, all employees must strive to contribute to maintaining the trust of Abu Dhabi through oil development and social contribution programs, but also to secure a stable supply of energy to Japan.

Voice

We need to function as a bridge between Japan and Abu Dhabi through skillful communications based on an understanding of the different cultures of the two countries. We play a key role as an intermediary for social contribution programs, too. In Abu Dhabi, I think that building relationships of trust that use face-to-face contact is very important. But even for these tasks, the first step is being respected by others by doing the job yourself with sincerity and dedication. People thank me, tell me I was a big help and say they will come back again. This really motivates me to take on my next job. The attitude of responding with sincerity to requests from the Abu Dhabi government has been part of our corporate culture for a long time. I believe this attitude has been instrumental to our ability to establish a good relationship with Abu Dhabi.

Tomomi Yoshida
Administration Manager at JODCO Abu Dhabi office
Abu Dhabi wants assistance involving technologies and the people for oil and gas development. But we are also contributing to nation building with respect to developing industries, protecting the environment and providing education to the public. For many years, we have been involved in social contribution programs that reflect Abu Dhabi’s requests for assistance. To perform these activities, we place importance on building relationships rooted in trust with the people of Abu Dhabi. Interaction with the people of Abu Dhabi over many years has made us a presence that is synonymous with Japan. This is why people contact us with all types of requests related to Japan. By doing everything we can with good faith to respond to these requests leads to even more requests. This process creates a positive cycle that constantly strengthens relationships based on mutual trust. I believe that my job is to preserve and build on this reputation for trust that my predecessors at JODCO have established.

I joined the INPEX Perth office one year ago, for on the job training in geophysics. At the beginning, I had some difficulties adapting myself to the Japanese and the Australian culture, which is very different from Abu Dhabi culture. However, with the help from my colleagues, I was able to get used to it quickly and had a great experience working with various nationalities in the Japanese company located in Perth, Australia. Through this training, I was not only feeling more accustomed to Japanese culture but I also was impressed with the enthusiastic work ethic of the INPEX culture. I would like to contribute to ADMA-OPCO with what I have learned in the Perth office.

We are doing our jobs while staying in constant touch with related parties at ZADCO and other companies as well as discussing how to achieve the targets set by the shareholders in a safe and efficient manner. Our workforce comes from more than 35 countries. Furthermore, many people are involved with the project, from shareholders to workers at the operation sites. On the corporate side, it is extremely difficult to establish common goals that incorporate a broad range of opinions. I frequently visit people to hear their thoughts directly, and also visit the sites to explain various points. I want there to be a unified team effort between executives and workers for the success of this project.