

Gulf Construction

UAE Focus

Chemicals giant Sika has winning formula

The expertise of Swiss construction chemicals giant Sika was recently put to good use at the new Formula 1 racetrack at Yas Island in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

At Aldar's multi-billion-dollar Formula 1 circuit, several of Sika's high-tech systems were used to ensure structural durability and environmental safety, says Imad Jaber, business unit manager, contractors, Sika UAE, adding that this vote of confidence in Sika is a testimony to its stature in the industry.

Sika, which is celebrating 100 years in the business next year, is a one-stop shop for chemicals in all projects, says Jaber.

"Sika provides comprehensive solutions from the basement to the roof," says Jaber. "Sika's product line includes high-grade concrete admixtures, specialty mortars, sealants and adhesives, damping and reinforcing materials, structural strengthening systems, industrial flooring and sealing films and many other hi-tech systems for the construction industry."

In rapidly changing markets, the ability to innovate is critical for success and Sika has stayed ahead of the game by constantly introducing new products and securing new patents, he says.

"Our research and development (R&D) is focused on finding new solutions while meeting health and safety needs," he explains. "Sika's R&D strategy is two-pronged. The first focuses on centrally organised research – on long-term programmes, analytical services and R&D management for the entire Sika group.

"The second involves the development of these products into innovative solutions and includes application engineering. This is managed regionally at eight Sika technology centres across the world, in cooperation with the local Sika technical support centres, which are also involved in further adapting products and systems to local conditions and the diverse individual requirements of our markets."

Detailing Sika's expertise in concrete technology, he says that the company can solve technical challenges and improve the production process – whether in extensive ready-mix operations, the industrial production of dry mortar, side-batched concrete on large projects or precast concrete in factory conditions.

"Sika does this through a range of super-plasticisers, accelerators, retarders, form-release agents, curing agents and many others," he says.

Waterproofing is another core competency of Sika, says Jaber, adding that waterproofing of structures can be a very challenging task. "Watertight construction can only be achieved by careful design, the right choice of concepts and products, plus professional workmanship with quality control on site."

Sika, he continues, provides high-quality waterproofing solutions in co-operation with its affiliates Sarnafil and Liquid Plastics.

Meanwhile, for industrial flooring, Sika is an expert in concrete floor slabs. "Floors are amongst the most exposed and stressed parts of a building," says Jaber. "They must have high resistance to mechanical and chemical stresses without sacrificing their functional performance and appearance. Sika provides the right solution for various requirements with a comprehensive range of products including Sikafloor, which is specially designed for car-parking structures."

For wooden floors, meanwhile, Sika has elastic adhesives for optimum installation. "Sika created the concept of elastic wood floor bonding in the early 1990s and Sika Marine elastic adhesive systems have been successfully to dampen sound, improve walking comfort, even stress distribution points, and secure perimeter

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joints. Also, the adhesives bond to a wide range of woods and substrates.

Finally, Sika has products to protect steel from corrosion as well as fire. "Sika products help protect structural steel efficiently and cost-effectively against corrosion, while its coatings and renders are specially designed for structural steel, support frames and other steel structures requiring fire protection."

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