

# Expanding Business in MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA & The Search for Top Talent

*A Guide by AIMS International*



# Introduction

Welcome to **AIMS International**, your strategic partner in leadership advisory services, dedicated to unlocking the full potential of global leadership with a presence in over **50 countries** and more than **500 partners and consultants** worldwide.

In the dynamic markets of the **Middle East and Africa** and as a prominent player with local offices strategically positioned across the region, AIMS International understands the unique challenges and opportunities that businesses encounter in these diverse and thriving markets.

## **Navigating New Markets with Confidence**

Embarking on new ventures in the Middle East and Africa can be both exhilarating and complex. The diverse cultural landscapes, intricate regulatory environments, and rapidly evolving business dynamics present a unique set of challenges for organisations seeking to establish a strong leadership presence. At AIMS, **we specialise in guiding our clients** through the uncertainties of these markets, offering bespoke executive search and leadership advisory solutions tailored to your specific needs.

## **Local Expertise, Global Perspective**

Our local offices serve as **hubs of knowledge**, equipped with teams of seasoned professionals who possess a deep understanding of the nuances within each of their markets. By combining this **local expertise** with a **global perspective**, we offer a comprehensive approach that ensures our clients make informed decisions, navigate cultural intricacies, and cultivate effective leadership strategies.

**Let's Get Started.**

# Middle East and Africa AIMS International Offices



- Countries that we cover:  
**Bahrain**      **Oman**  
**Ivory Coast**      **Qatar**  
**Jordan**      **Saudi Arabia**  
**Kuwait**      **West Africa**  
**Morocco**      **Turkey**

## MEA Subregion Overview

Countless trade agreements  
with top 5:

- African Continental Free Trade Area (**AfCFTA**)
- Economic Partnership Agreements (**EPAs**)
- GCC-EU Free Trade Agreement (**FTA**)
- US-Morocco Free Trade Agreement (**FTA**)
- Turkey-Africa Free Trade Area (**TAFTA**)

○ More than 60% workforce  
under 30

○ Africa alone population  
of 1.4 billion

“Africa will soon have the  
world’s largest working-age population,  
which could meet the growing global  
talent shortage via services outsourcing.”

– Reimagining Economic Growth in Africa 2023  
McKinsey Report

# Life Sciences in the Middle East & Africa: A Beacon of Hope for a Flourishing Future

In recent years, the Middle East and Africa (MEA) have emerged as dynamic and strategic hubs for the life sciences and medical sector, presenting unprecedented opportunities for business expansion and investment. As the region experiences robust economic growth and increased focus on healthcare, the life sciences industry is positioned for remarkable advancements. However, amidst the promises lie unique challenges that require strategic navigation

One of the primary drivers of the life sciences sector in the MEA region is the substantial investment in healthcare infrastructure. Governments across the region are channeling funds into the development of state-of-the-art medical facilities, research centers, and pharmaceutical manufacturing units. The demand for cutting-edge technologies and equipment is consequently on the rise, creating lucrative prospects for businesses specializing in medical technology and infrastructure development.

## **Rising Investment in Research and Development:**

The MEA region is witnessing a significant uptick in research and development activities in the life sciences field. Academic institutions and private entities are increasingly collaborating to drive innovation in pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and medical devices.

This surge in R&D investments not only promotes scientific advancements but also creates a ground for partnerships between local and international players seeking to capitalize on the region's research capabilities.

## **Emerging Pharmaceutical Markets:**

The pharmaceutical industry in the MEA region is experiencing unprecedented growth, fueled by a growing population and increasing healthcare awareness. Local governments are actively promoting the production of generic drugs and developing partnerships with global pharmaceutical companies especially Market Access programmes. This presents an attractive landscape for businesses looking to expand their pharmaceutical manufacturing and distribution operations.

## **Challenges in Regulatory Landscape:**

Despite the promising opportunities, navigating the regulatory landscape in the MEA region can be intricate. Varied regulatory frameworks across different countries pose a challenge for businesses aiming for a seamless market entry. It is imperative for companies to stay abreast of the evolving regulatory environment and develop comprehensive strategies to ensure compliance while maintaining operational efficiency.



### Addressing Healthcare Disparities:

While the healthcare sector is rapidly evolving, challenges related to accessibility and affordability persist. There is a pressing need to address healthcare disparities within the region, presenting an opportunity for businesses to develop innovative solutions and collaborate with local stakeholders to improve healthcare access and outcomes.

The Middle East and Africa are witnessing a truly transformative phase in the life sciences and medical sector, marked by unparalleled opportunities and challenges. Businesses that navigate the regulatory landscape, leverage the growing demand for healthcare infrastructure, and contribute to addressing healthcare disparities are poised for success in this dynamic market. The demand for skilled professionals in the life sciences sector is on the rise. **Attracting and retaining top talent can be a hurdle for businesses entering the MEA market, emphasizing the importance of robust recruitment and retention strategies.**

### Attractive Sectors for Business Expansion and Investment:

- Pharmaceuticals and Biotechnology
- Medical Devices and Technology
- Healthcare Services
- Digital Health Solutions
- Medical Tourism

# Market Expansion Case Study & Interview with MiGenTra GmbH

## Towards Equitable Access to Biologic Medicines in the Middle East & Africa (MEA): the Story of MiGenTra

In the ever-evolving landscape of the life sciences industry, the Middle East and Africa (MEA) region holds a wealth of untapped potential, along with unique challenges. In this comprehensive interview, we delve into the insights and experiences of **Frederic Bouvier**, Vice President Corporate & Business Development at **MiGenTra**, and **Dina Soliman**, Director of Strategic Operations & Business Development at **Minapharm Pharmaceuticals**, both companies being part of the **Minapharm Group**. We will also explore how **AIMS International** has supported them throughout the journey.

**MINAPHARM**   
PHARMACEUTICALS

 **MiGenTra**  
Healthcare Transforming Medicines

**Frederic Bouvier**  
**VP, Head Corporate & Business**  
**Development**  
**MiGentra GmbH**

Frederic joined MiGenTra in February 2022 bringing more than **20 years** of biopharmaceutical industry experience. Prior to joining MiGenTra, Frederic served as **Head Strategy & Portfolio Management** for Fresenius Kabi SwissBioSim and **Head Biosimilars** for Sanofi's Global Diabetes Division.

Frederic holds an **MSc in Organic Chemistry** (University of Houston), an **MSc in Chemical Engineering** (Ecole Supérieure de Chimie, Physique & Electronique de Lyon), and an **MBA** (Sciences Po Paris).



**Dina Soliman**  
**Director of Strategic Operations**  
**& Business Development**  
**Minapharm**

Dina has been working in the pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical industries for **20 years** with extensive experience in the Egyptian market. In her current role, Dina is focusing on establishing the presence of Minapharm in Africa and the Middle East to provide innovative yet affordable treatments to economically challenged markets.

Dina earned a **BSc in Chemistry** (American University in Cairo), and a **MSc in Business Information Technology** (School of Computer Science, Middlesex University).





**Could you help us understand how you see the status of healthcare in MEA, what make this region an attractive proposition for companies in the life sciences industry, and what hurdles remain?**

*Frederic:* The MEA region has long been overlooked by global pharmaceutical players: this is particularly true for Africa. We believe there are three main reasons for this situation.

First, there's the issue of insufficient healthcare coverage coupled with low-income populations. This creates a challenging situation where companies struggle to price their products in a way that is both affordable for patients and profitable for them.

Second, the lack of healthcare infrastructure, particularly in countries with high rates of rural population. This in turns leads to late or no diagnosis, and the inability to supply and dispense drugs to patients.

Last, the absence of regulatory harmonisation when it comes to reviewing and approving medicines, resulting in highly fragmented markets, hard to navigate.

But here's the thing – we believe we have the right ingredients to overcome these hurdles and are uniquely positioned to benefit from MEA's largely untapped market opportunity.

**We understand that access to biologic medicines remains a challenge in MEA. Could you walk us through the root cause of this situation?**

*Frederic:* Contrary to drugs, which are typically manufactured through chemical synthesis, biologic medicines (also called biologics) are produced using living systems such as microorganisms or plant or animal cells, and are very large molecules. By way of example, while a molecule of aspirin has an average mass of about 180 Da, a biologic such as a monoclonal antibody has an average mass of about 150,000 Da.

Producing these biologics requires highly skilled personnel, and complex and lengthy manufacturing steps.

As a result, selling prices are high to very high, and most patients in MEA cannot afford this class of medicine. While 80% of patients in North America and Europe can access or afford biologic medicines, there is a stark contrast in Africa, with less than 20%.

**Minapharm embarked onto its biotechnology journey over two decades ago, arguably a courageous move then. What was the vision and what successes have you achieved?**

*Dina:* Minapharm was established in 1958 as the first privately owned company in Egypt with a mission to provide innovative medicines in an affordable way.

As an early recognizer of the global shift in the healthcare industry towards large, complex molecules, Minapharm adopted an evolutionary vision and embarked on biotechnology in the 90's, defying the region's industry norms. It started with a strategic joint venture with Rhein-Biotech, Germany (now Dynavax Europe), followed by the acquisition of ProBioGen AG, the Berlin-based cellular engineering expert specialist and global provider of intelligent proprietary technologies.

In 2001, Minapharm established Egypt's first biopharmaceutical manufacturing facilities and R&D platform to develop and manufacture therapeutic recombinant proteins from the cell line all the way to the finished product, allowing a significant cost reduction. Our first recombinant protein launched in 2005 demonstrated an unprecedented price erosion model in the market and led to a six-fold price reduction of its imported competitors to catalyse Egypt's Hepatitis C eradication programme. This same model was replicated upon the launch of the next therapeutic proteins on the market, transforming healthcare for patients in Egypt.

Capitalising on this strong foundation, Minapharm strengthened its presence across the region, where access to advanced medicines is an everyday burden due to their high prices.

In 2021, Minapharm and ProBioGen AG incorporated **MiGenTra GmbH** to elevate access to innovative complex immunotherapies for millions of patients in Africa and the Middle East.

### **MiGenTra was incorporated mid-2021 as new addition to the Minapharm Group. What are the mission and vision of this young company and its unique selling points?**

*Frederic:* At MiGenTra, we believe that healthcare is a human right: it is encrypted deep into our DNA. No one on this planet should be denied access to lifesaving biological medicines for cost reasons. Unfortunately, this is a situation faced by most patients in Africa.

We want to change this situation; we want to transform healthcare on the continent by developing and commercialising high quality biological medicines at affordable cost.

To achieve our goal, we are progressing a portfolio of 6 biosimilar candidates (ie. biologics highly similar other already approved biologics, also called 'reference medicines') by leveraging the capabilities and expertise available within the Minapharm Group: world class cell-line development at ProBioGen AG, in Berlin, coupled with state-of-the-art process development and low-cost manufacturing at Minapharm Pharmaceuticals.

To meet the needs of patients in MEA, we are enriching this portfolio by licensing-in carefully selected biosimilar products, complementary to ours. In November 2022, Minapharm and MiGenTra signed with Dubai-based Bioventure an exclusive licence agreement for the commercialization of multiple biosimilar candidates developed and manufactured by Alvotech, a world leader in the development and manufacture of biosimilar medicines, for 19 countries in MEA.



We will be filing our first two biosimilars in key markets in the very near future: Bonosome, a teriparatide product biosimilar to Forteo/Forsteo developed in-house by Minapharm Pharmaceuticals, and ustekinumab, a biosimilar candidate to Stelara, the first product from our alliance with Bioventure/Alvotech.

So, stay tuned for further announcements.

**Entering new markets comes many challenges. Can you explain how MiGenTra plans to establish its footprint in the MEA region? And then, how it will grow its geographic reach?**

*Frederic:* To start with, MiGenTra is already deeply rooted in Africa, thanks to the export strategy Minapharm initiated a few years ago. So the low hanging fruit will be, no doubt, to leverage at the maximum this unique network.

In parallel, we are actively working on establishing new export routes to five promising countries in Africa—Morocco, Algeria, Kenya, Ghana, and Nigeria—and four countries in the Middle East—Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Yemen—by partnering with local champions.

There is no one size fits all approach when it comes to partnering deals. While in some cases simple distribution agreements may suffice, in some others we may need to contemplate more complex agreements, e.g., to localise part(s) of manufacturing and ensure optimal market access. Thus, flexibility is key, and our approach will be tailored to the needs and specificities of each country.

In the long run, we will pursue aggressive geographic expansion by, for example, turning certain countries into regional hubs able to service neighbouring ones.

Within the next 5 years, our ambition is to have our products available to ca. 70% of the population living in the region.

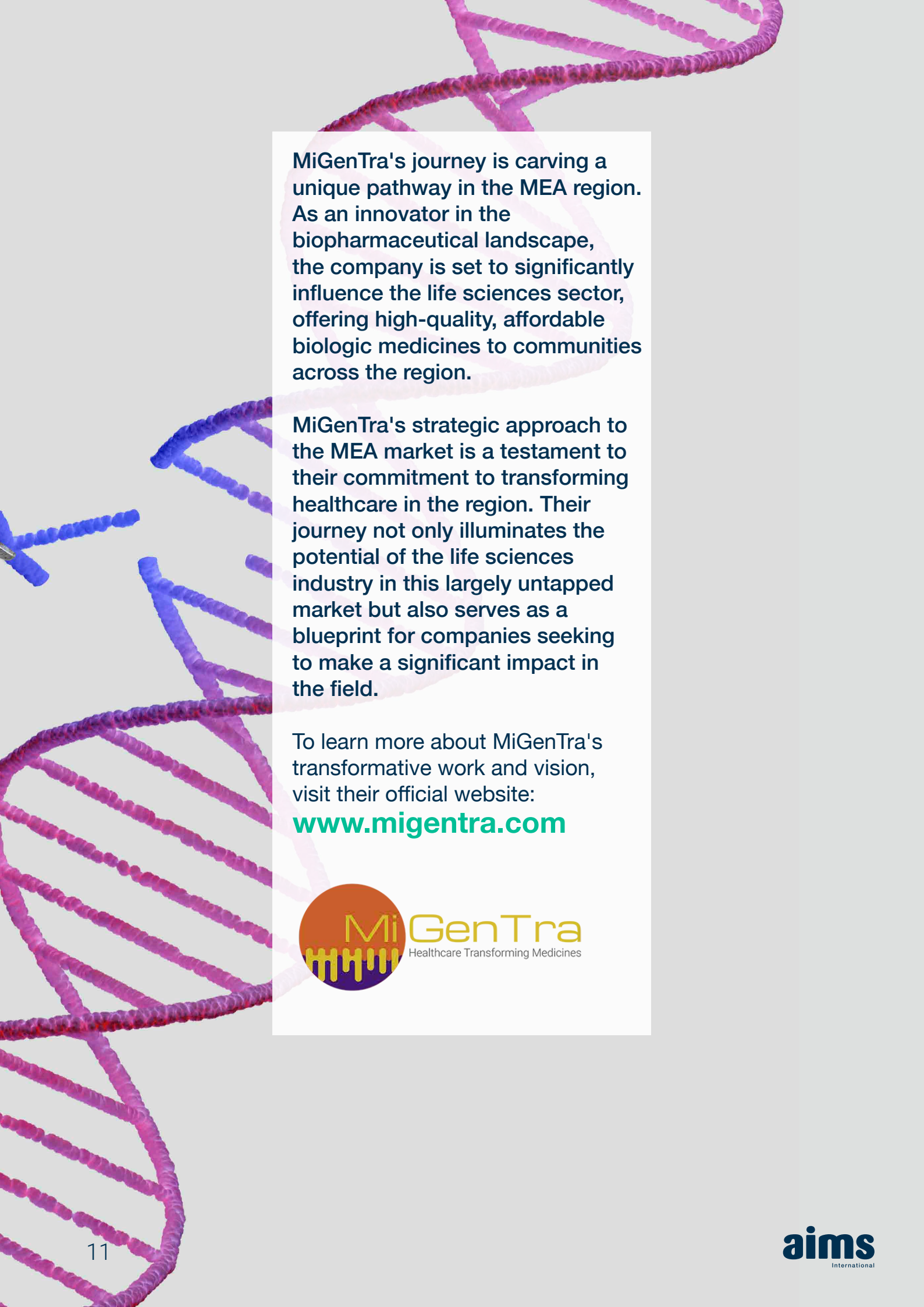
**Talent is a key asset in any industry, more so in life sciences. In the highly competitive MEA region, how has MiGenTra approached talent acquisition and strategies to build a skilled workforce that supports their growth and innovation in the life sciences sector?**

*Frederic:* As we mapped out all necessary resources and functions, we quickly came to realise that some activities could not and should not be driven from Berlin, where MiGenTra's headquarters are.

For example, profiles combining a solid understanding of biologics together with a proven track record of building and managing sales organisations in the MEA region were absolutely key in delivering on our ambition: talents hard to identify from Europe. This is how AIMS came into play.

*Dina:* AIMS quickly recognised MiGenTra's unique requirements and tailored their search strategy, with results exceeding our expectations. Because of their experience in the life sciences sector, they were able to cater to our unique needs. Their approach combined speed, precision, and an understanding of our strategic goals.





MiGenTra's journey is carving a unique pathway in the MEA region. As an innovator in the biopharmaceutical landscape, the company is set to significantly influence the life sciences sector, offering high-quality, affordable biologic medicines to communities across the region.

MiGenTra's strategic approach to the MEA market is a testament to their commitment to transforming healthcare in the region. Their journey not only illuminates the potential of the life sciences industry in this largely untapped market but also serves as a blueprint for companies seeking to make a significant impact in the field.

To learn more about MiGenTra's transformative work and vision, visit their official website:

[www.migentra.com](http://www.migentra.com)





# When Private Equity Partners With Executive Search: **A Game Changer!**

In the dynamic landscape of the Middle East and Africa, where investment opportunities are at an exponential rate, private equity firms are increasingly looking for strategic partnerships to navigate this transformative era in our business world. This specific partnership with Leadership Advisory firms is gaining traction. We will delve into the benefits that serve both parties and why it is a game-changer for both companies.

The Middle East and Africa and its investment opportunities, are countless with sectors such as technology, fintech, healthcare, renewable energy and infrastructure capturing the attention of private equity investors. As the region continues to reach track record growth, the need for skilled leadership becomes a priority for companies seeking to capitalize on these opportunities. This is where executive search firms step in, serving as a crucial bridge For PE firms and their portfolio companies.

## **The Role of Executive Search in Talent Acquisition**

Executive search firms bring a wealth of expertise to the table, especially those with a global footprint, specializing in identifying, attracting, and placing top-tier executives who possess the skill set and vision needed to drive businesses forward.

This is to be emphasized that within the PE context, a culture of growth, and turnaround are a priority. Finding the right competent leaders with a deep understanding of the local market and their respective industries and cultural nuances becomes a competitive advantage.

## **Tailored Solutions for Private Equity Success**

Why are we a good match for PE firms? One of the key benefits of leveraging executive search firms especially in the Middle East and Africa (where sometimes markets are new and culture is foreign) is their ability to tailor solutions to the unique needs of private equity investors. Whether it's conducting targeted research, or identifying executives with a track record of success in specific industries, we play a crucial role in enhancing the post due diligence process.

**At AIMS International We understand that a performance-driven mindset is essential for maximizing returns for those investments and we specialize in catering to specific needs of shareholders taking into consideration the local nuances that enable you to succeed.**

*Khaled Khattab  
Business Development Manager  
AIMS Egypt*



# AIMS EGYPT

Founded back in 1997 prior to joining AIMS International under the Leadership of Pauline D'Arcy the Egypt office, was recognized as the pioneer in Executive Search in Egypt and for over a decade, we established a reputation for setting the gold standard in professional recruitment and executive search in our local Egyptian market.

In 2007, we joined AIMS International by becoming the local Egypt partner and since we have embarked on a journey marked by numerous successful assignments as a true leadership advisory partner to our clients.

We excel across all major disciplines and sectors and through our Global Industry Practices Offering you best in class services in Board Services, Executive Search and Talent Management.

**Zeinab Noureldin**  
VP EMEA - AIMS International  
Managing Partner



**Pauline D'Arcy**  
Managing Director





# Embracing ESG for a Sustainable and Thriving Future

The Middle East and Africa (MEA) region is experiencing a notable shift toward **environmental, social, and governance (ESG)** awareness and. This shift is not only a reflection of the region's commitment to responsible business practices but also signals **promising opportunities for companies** seeking to establish a foothold in the market. The region is vast and for the more developed markets ESG has been on Board Agenda's for quite some time. The true shift is the adoption and understanding of the importance of ESG not only within organizations but also within communities.

## The Rise of ESG Consciousness

Traditionally known for its rich cultural diversity and economic growth, the MEA region is now actively embracing ESG principles. Governments, businesses, and consumers alike are recognizing the significance of sustainability in addressing pressing issues such as climate change, social inequality, and ethical governance.

For companies looking to expand their operations in the MEA region, aligning with ESG values can provide a significant **competitive advantage**. Increasingly, consumers are making informed choices based on a company's commitment to environmental responsibility, social impact, and ethical governance.

By incorporating sustainability into their core business strategies, companies can resonate more deeply with the values of the local population, building trust and loyalty.

As global leadership advisors we understand this and we make sure we build sustainability into our own core business and operations.

The good news is governments in the MEA region are actively introducing policies and regulations that encourage sustainable business practices. Each country differs from the other. But companies committed to ESG principles but also sets a clear framework for responsible conduct encouraging other companies and similarly the competition to also look deeply at their own practices.

As regulatory requirements on ESG slowly become introduced, companies in the MEA region with robust ESG practices may find it easier to access green financing. Investors are showing a growing interest in businesses that align with environmental and social goals, presenting an opportunity for companies to secure funding for expansion, and potential wider pool of partnerships.

We firmly believe that embracing sustainability is not just a compliance requirement; it's a **catalyst for innovation**. We clearly see companies that integrate ESG considerations into their operations are more likely to identify new opportunities, reduce operational risks, and build long-term resilience. This proactive approach positions businesses to adapt to changing market dynamics, ensuring sustained success in the MEA region.



# Empowering the Just Energy Transition: Leveraging **Global Talent Mobility** in Renewable Energy

In our pursuit of a cleaner and more sustainable global energy landscape, a critical facet that demands our attention is the just energy transition. This transformative shift not only holds the promise of environmental renewal but also carries the potential to reshape the socio-economic dynamics of our societies.

To navigate this intricate path successfully, harnessing the expertise of skilled talent on a global scale emerges as a key strategy.

## **Navigating challenges through pragmatic solutions**

As seasoned consultants, we are committed to:

- acknowledging the challenges that this transition presents
- proactively seeking pragmatic solutions for our clients

By deep-diving into the realities of renewable energy, we can find ways to address these challenges and pave the way for a more equitable energy transformation.

## **Addressing injustices in energy transition**

*The World Future Council*, a non-governmental organisation committed to shaping a brighter future for all, underscores the importance of a just energy transition in averting several injustices. These include:

- preventing the exclusion of marginalised groups from social and political discourse
- recognising the unique interests of various societal segments
- curbing the concentration of benefits within a select few stakeholders
- facilitating reskilling for those displaced by economic reorganisation
- fostering the creation of climate-aligned jobs in regions grappling with restructuring

## **Talent acquisition in the midst of change**

A recurring theme in this transition is the issue of employment – both its preservation and transformation.

As the Managing Partner of an executive search firm operating in the ever-evolving African economy, I am acutely aware of the complexities surrounding talent acquisition, particularly when seeking scarce skills in an environment marred by staggering unemployment rates.

## **The paradox of skilled individuals amidst high unemployment**

The paradox of skilled individuals being scarce amidst high unemployment levels might seem counterintuitive. However, it's important to recognise that top-tier talent tends to gravitate towards markets that recognise and value their capabilities.

During periods of subdued economic growth, these exceptional opportunities become even scarcer, leaving other job seekers to fill the void.



Unfortunately, for pivotal roles that demand excellence, the available pool often falls short.

### **The surge of green technologies**

As history has shown us, paradigm shifts begin gradually and then surge forward with astonishing speed. The narrative holds true for the transition to alternative energy sources and the rise of electric vehicles, among other so-called green technologies.

This accelerating demand for green energy solutions creates a disparity between the supply and demand for skilled professionals.

### **The complexity of skill transfer**

While certain skills might be transferable between traditional fossil fuel industries and the emerging green energy sector, this transition is rarely seamless.

The complexities involved often necessitate experiential training and targeted coaching to bridge the gap effectively.

### **A multifaceted approach to energy transition**

In conclusion, our journey towards a just energy transition necessitates a multifaceted approach. This includes:

- acknowledging the potential injustices of an unmanaged transition
- prioritising reskilling and job creation
- harnessing global talent mobility to bridge skills gaps

By embracing these strategies, we can catalyse the seamless integration of renewable energy solutions while ensuring that no segment of society is left behind.

As consultants and experts in our field, we are committed to guiding our clients and partners through these challenges and facilitating a transition that is not only energy-efficient but socially equitable as well.

*Leonie Pentz  
Managing Partner  
AIMS South Africa*



# AIMS International Commits to Sustainable Practices

## Incorporating the UN Principles Strategies, Policies, and Procedures for an Equitable Future

**We promote internal sustainable mindfulness;** to help and support all our consultants to think and act sustainability through conscious evolution.

**We build sustainable practices both internally and externally;** our key drivers will be the development of sustainable human capital through education and assessment of the critical competencies associated with the UN 17 SDG's.

**We promote a sustainability mindset as a key business driver for clients;** resulting in the deployment of a global movement embedding sustainability into core business strategies and operations.



United Nations  
Global Compact

“By joining the United Nations Global Compact, we are taking a significant step towards realizing our vision of a sustainable and equitable future. Our decision to join the United Nations Global Compact reflects our unwavering commitment to operating in an ethical and sustainable manner, and to aligning our business strategies with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.”

Dimitris Kleftakis  
President, AIMS International

## Leonie Pentz VP - Sustainability Global Head - Energy

Leonie has 20+ years as a recruitment professional in the Sub Sahara African market and since January 2011 as AIMS International's Managing Partner based in South Africa. She represented the MEA region on the AIMS International Executive Board from 2016 to 2022.

Leonie spent a substantial part of her career as a specialist FMCG recruiter and later branched out into Industrial, Energy and Financial Industries. Her passion for AIMS' global service offering and collaboration was sparked 2004 whilst working for a boutique Management Appointments firm, when she met with Rolf Heeb, AIMS German Partner who also served as EMEA head and later as AIMS President. This led to a South African collaboration and in 2008 Leonie launched the **AIMS Executive Search brand in South Africa**. Since 2011 she is the owner and Managing Partner for AIMS South Africa and a member of the Global Consumer practice group and leads the Energy & Natural Resources practice group.



Leonie has extensive experience representing PE firms and International investors who are looking to appoint executive leaders and key professional staff for both start-ups and existing operations in the SSA markets.

Under Leonie's leadership, the highly experienced South African team has more recently developed their Talent Management services in keeping with **AIMS' Find&Grow strategy** and offers HR Audits, HR policy and procedure implementation and management, leadership development, assessments, etc.



## What are your thoughts on sustainability becoming crucial for businesses and its impact on Executive Search and Leadership Development?

A corporate sustainability strategy and plan is no longer an optional extra – it is essential for the longevity of any business. Companies that don't take sustainability seriously risk becoming obsolete. You can look at it as a risk or an opportunity.

Bob Willard has been saying for 20 years what most people are just now realising: to be profitable, you need to be sustainable, not the other way around.

We know that in order to reach any strategic goal, the culture needs to change, and that culture is driven by behaviours. This starts with leadership behaviour.

Shareholders must understand the behaviours that drive sustainability targets and evaluate their executives for a sustainability mindset.

To fill the gaps, we must recruit leaders with a sustainability mindset, and for the rest, training and development are essential.

## Can you explain your strategy for identifying and recruiting leaders who prioritise sustainability and environmental responsibility?

At AIMS, we consider a sustainability leadership mindset a mega competency.

It is important to identify the behavioural competencies that drive sustainability, localise them to your particular context, and assess them when recruiting your leaders.

Leaders who are inclusive will in turn recruit for inclusivity, creating a positive ripple effect all the way down the chain.

Many people think that a person from a vulnerable group will automatically be open-minded and inclusive, but this is not always the case.

On the other hand, a white male in his mid-fifties could in fact be exceptionally culturally agile and inclusive.

Therefore, conducting the correct assessments with the input of an Industrial Psychologist is essential when recruiting executive leaders.

Similar assessment tools can be used to evaluate your current leadership team's cultural agility and ability to drive corporate sustainability targets. You can only improve what you can measure.



## How do you integrate sustainability with clients and how does it impact organisational culture and performance?

For every assignment that we discuss with our clients, we prepare an in-depth profile analysis that includes the role and company's value proposition, essential competencies needed for the role, and a specific section on corporate sustainability where we discuss our client's ESG challenges and targets.

We know that leaders today want to align their purpose with the purpose of their organisation, and that our client's Employer Brand is intricately linked to their sustainability reputation.

This information helps us successfully align the essential skills and culture needed for a particular environment.

As Peter Drucker said, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." Your business objectives are driven by people. Leaders should create a culture that is fertile for their business strategy to grow, by fostering the necessary behaviours.

## In what ways does AIMS International incorporate sustainability to reach all Local AIMS offices around the world?

AIMS International recently joined the UN Global Compact as a global participant and we are currently rolling out this initiative to all our Partner offices worldwide, in more than 50 countries.

Our sustainability team has already been tracking certain targets such as gender diversity, both internally and for positions filled in various industries with our clients.

Many of our Partner offices are paperless and quite a few offer remote work opportunities like in South Africa and Switzerland, where we work remotely almost 90% of the time.

We have implemented virtual conference facilities and will continue to have a hybrid model in the future.

Our next step is to clarify and break down our targets even further into measurable bite-sized chunks and get all our Partners' commitment to work towards these targets in participation with the UN Global Compact initiative.



# Revolutionising Board Evaluations: The Pinnacle Advantage of Online Assessment

In the dynamic realm of corporate governance, the strategic imperative of selecting the right individuals for a Board Director role traditionally focuses on functional skills such as financial acumen and technical proficiency. However, the evolving landscape of leadership demands a more nuanced approach. While organisations often have insights into the functional skills of potential candidates, the challenge lies in identifying intangible qualities which are crucial for effective board leadership. This underscores the growing need for a holistic approach to board selection, recognising that while functional skills lay the foundation, contemporary boards require leaders with a broader set of soft skills encompassing emotional intelligence, effective communication, adaptability, and ethical decision-making, among others.

In response to this challenge, AIMS International advocates for a holistic approach in board selection, where online evaluations emerge as a cornerstone. These assessments, with their global reach, offer a profound exploration of skills, providing a complete understanding of a candidate's leadership potential. In the fast-paced digital era, online assessments redefine board selection. Geographical flexibility, time efficiency, scalability, user-friendly interfaces, and data security are its pillars, offering a seamless experience.

## Benefits of online assessment centres for Board Selection:

### 1- Comprehensive soft skill evaluation:

Exercises in decision-making and interpersonal skills provide a deeper understanding of candidates.

### 2- Decision-making under pressure:

Scenarios mirror high-stakes situations, assessing a candidate's ability to make sound decisions, navigate uncertainty, and take calculated risks.

### 3- Ethical mindset evaluation:

Exercises focus on evaluating a candidate's ethical mindset and alignment with organisational values.

### 4- Interpersonal dynamics and stakeholder management:

Assessments gauge a candidate's ability to navigate interpersonal dynamics, adapt communication styles (especially in the online environment), and build meaningful relationships with stakeholders.

### 5- Independent thinking and diversity considerations:

Candidates are evaluated on their ability to think independently, challenge the status quo, and embrace diverse views.



## **6- Emotional intelligence and self-awareness:**

Exercises delve into emotional intelligence and self-awareness, critical for effective leadership.

## **7- Performance orientation and continuous learning:**

Simulated scenarios evaluate a candidate;s focus on organisational performance, goal-setting ability, and commitment to a culture of learning.

The transformative power of online assessment centres lies in their ability to redefine boardselection dynamics. By uniting efficiency and effectiveness through online accessibility, these centres become strategic assets for boards aiming to identify and appoint leaders who exceed the demands of today's boardroom. The benefits extend to overall board effectiveness, governance excellence, stakeholder confidence, and long-term talent retention.

*Ashleigh Ball  
Consultant  
AIMS South Africa*



# AIMS SOUTH AFRICA

Our Managing Partner Leonie Pentz's involvement with the AIMS International organisation originated in 2005, when AIMS International first entered the African market. Under current leadership since January 2011, **AIMS International South Africa** has been building a core team of seasoned recruitment and talent management professionals who truly understand the South African ethos.

As part of AIMS South Africa's **sustainability drive**, we are excited to announce that we have concluded negotiations which will improve our South African operation's **BBBEE** rating substantially.

This step will elevate AIMS South Africa into the unique position of being a black empowered Executive Search business with a solid track record of the last 10+ years, continuing under the same leadership that has become synonymous with quality and consistency.

**Leonie Pentz**  
Managing Partner



# AIMS GULF

We have extensive experience in finding high quality executives for our clients across multiple functions or for projects in different industries including Consumer Goods, Life Sciences, Automotive & Mobility, Financial Services, Energy & Natural Resources, Industrial, Media & Technology, and Professional Services, including notably Real Estate, Logistics, and Education.

Understanding the organisation, position and culture fit is critical to the success of any search. Prior to the commencement of every search assignment we place particular emphasis on client briefing to understand the position, organisation, business strategy team culture and any type of transformation needed to incorporate this into our assessment process.

At AIMS International Gulf, our team is committed and focused on delivering professional services that create a unique experience for clients and candidates alike, that help enable your business to achieve superior results.

**Kyriakos Kofinas**  
Founding Partner





**Executive Search | Board Services | Talent Management**

GLOBAL VISION, LOCAL EXPERTISE  
AND SUSTAINABILITY AT **OUR CORE**



[aimsinternational.com](https://aimsinternational.com)