

LOCAL CONTENT



CASE STUDY – STEPHEN ASHCROFT: OWN PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES WITH LOCAL CONTENT STRATEGY

Stephen Ashcroft, former Director of Contracts and Procurement at AECOM, played a key role in transforming Saudi Arabia's infrastructure. His Local Content Strategy, aligned with Saudi Vision 2030, focused on stakeholder engagement, supplier development, job creation, diversity, supply chain localization, compliance, and reporting.

This strategy, marked by continuous improvement, exceeded local content regulatory requirements, and contributed to the project being recognised as the "Infrastructure Project of the Year, 2021" by Construction Week, showcasing its impact on social development and community engagement.

DETAILS

Stephen has had the privilege of serving as the Director of Contracts and Procurement at AECOM within the Saudi Customs Authority EPMO from February 2019 to June 2021. During this tenure, Stephen was entrusted with the pivotal task of overseeing the transformation of Saudi Arabia's land, sea, and airport immigration and customs border crossings, representing a monumental \$1 billion transformation initiative.

This transformative project encompassed various facets, including world-leading design, office infrastructure, housing, solar power integration, technology enhancement, water treatment solutions, professional services, and operations and maintenance components. As part of the core leadership team, Stephen assumed the role of the Local Content Transformation Lead, a role dedicated to developing a Local Content Strategy in alignment with Saudi Vision 2030 and the Local Content Concept (lcgpa.gov.sa) while ensuring compliance with Saudi Procurement Law.

APPROACH AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** initiated engagement with diverse stakeholders, including local communities, government authorities, and relevant partners, to gather invaluable insights and understand their specific needs and expectations. This comprehensive stakeholder engagement informed the strategy's development.
- **Supplier Development:** emphasized supplier development by providing support and mentorship to local suppliers and service providers. Dual-language presentations and events with suppliers were organized to foster engagement and alignment with our local content objectives.
- **Job Creation:** Central to the strategy was the goal of job creation. We set specific targets for local job creation and prioritized hiring from the local talent pool in our procurement projects, both for direct employment and subcontracting opportunities.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Ensuring diversity and inclusion was a key element of our approach, offering equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of gender, age, or background.
- **Supply Chain Localization:** encouraged supply chain localization, urging suppliers to establish a local presence, manufacture locally, or source materials and components locally to increase overall local content.
- **Compliance and Reporting:** Throughout the strategy's implementation, maintained rigorous compliance with Saudi Procurement Law and other relevant regulations. Regular reporting on local content achievements and their social impact was a core aspect, ensuring full visibility and sponsorship of Saudi Customs leadership.
- **Performance Metrics and Assessment:** To gauge the effectiveness of the strategy, key performance indicators were developed regular assessments undertake to measure the impact on social outcomes and community engagement.
- **Continuous Improvement:** An unwavering commitment to continuous improvement was ingrained in our approach. The local content strategy was consistently refined and enhanced based on feedback, evaluation results, and changing community needs. The percentage increase in local content in the EPMO supply chain consistently exceeded the requirements of the Local Content Concept.

IN RETROSPECT

The Local Content Strategy played a pivotal role in fostering social development and community engagement while aligning with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030. The successful implementation of this innovative procurement strategy contributed significantly to the project's recognition as the "Infrastructure Project of the Year, 2021" by Construction Week.