



# Flexible working

Teamwork helps to increase Saras's conversion and crude flexibility success

Saras SpA's core business is refining. Its Sarroch refinery, on the Italian island of Sardinia, is one of the largest in the Mediterranean region and one of the most complex in Europe. The refinery has an operating capacity of 300,000 barrels a day and accounts for about 15% of Italy's total refining capacity. Importantly, it has the ability to produce high-quality products from the lower cost crude oils.

Maintaining the flexibility to refine different types of crude oil, including heavy and high-sulphur oils, is what gives Saras an advantage in a competitive market. The company is working to maintain this flexibility by reconfiguring its refinery, including revamping the hydrocracking and visbreaking units. The work will also enable the refinery's products to continue meeting the increasingly stringent environmental regulations.

Claudio Allevi, Refinery Development Manager, Saras SpA, explains, "The project will update Saras's refining configuration, allowing it to process heavier crudes as part of Saras's business plan. The decision to work with Shell Global Solutions on this revamp was natural, as we have a long mutual history of successful projects. They are the technology licensors and provided the basic design package for the unit.

The refinery reconfiguration is continuing with the revamp of the visbreaking unit, which started in April 2007. This work will include the installation of new soaker and vacuum flasher vessels. Allevi adds, "We want to use Shell Global Solutions'

deep thermal conversion technology, which is associated with its soaker visbreaker unit, to create more value from bottom-of-the-barrel feeds. This is a natural extension of Shell Global Solutions' licensed technology, but there is another reason for working with the company. Our visbreaker is intricately linked to our integrated gasification combined-cycle power plant, which is licensed from another company, and we wanted to work with specialists in integrating different technologies.

"Shell Global Solutions' staff do not just license technology and make theoretical calculations. They also receive feedback from a global network of refineries, which is important for us, as this experience will help in designing and optimising our units."

Allevi concludes, "The revamps are very important parts of our refinery reconfiguration. They will give us the flexibility to select opportunity crudes, and the increased conversion levels will help us to remain competitive. As a merchant refinery, it is important for us to stay flexible, up to date and competitive."

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