



Operational Excellence Program for SOCAR Downstream

Project scope

SOCAR Downstream operates complex petrochemical facilities with high requirements for safety, reliability, and continuous availability. Unplanned shutdowns lead to significant costs, while planned outages demand strong cross-disciplinary coordination.

Bilfinger delivered a multi-year operational excellence program across multiple sites to strengthen SOCAR Downstream's maintenance strategy. The program aligned process safety, mechanical integrity, and reliability into a single, coherent Asset Performance Management approach, supporting reduced downtime and long-term operational continuity.

The engagement started with a structured maturity assessment, followed by the introduction of standardized concepts, methods, and ways of working. Throughout the program, these were translated into practical application through hands-on implementation. The outcome is a shared maintenance strategy across disciplines and a clear roadmap enabling SOCAR Downstream to continue improving independently.

Client: SOCAR Downstream

Project duration: 3 years

Location: Azerbaijan

Market: Petrochemical

Key feature: Train-the-trainer approach to reinforce knowledge, introduce a new way of working, and encourage a mindset that supports and leads change

Bilfinger's involvement: Provided an Asset Performance Management system based on ISO 55000 to improve maintenance strategies and build client capabilities across multiple disciplines

Scope of Bilfinger's involvement

Bilfinger supported the full change journey, from initial assessment and solution design to on-site implementation. A structured change management approach was embedded to support adoption and sustainability.

Leadership alignment and communication workshops were conducted to support mindset change and capability development. A train-the-trainer model was applied to build internal ownership and ensure long-term continuity of the new way of working.

The program concluded with a final maturity assessment and a structured handover, confirming readiness for sustained application of the Asset Performance Management framework.

Results and Impact

The program strengthened cross-disciplinary understanding of maintenance strategy, reliability, asset integrity, and process safety. Key concepts are now shared across the organization rather than residing within individual functions.

Participants developed the skills and tools required to apply asset-based, risk-driven decision-making in daily practice. The organization now applies a structured and consistent approach to asset criticality and maintenance strategy management, providing a solid foundation for continued maturity growth.

A visible cultural shift emerged as teams actively promoted the new way of working and developed internal materials to reinforce learning and alignment.

Added value

Bilfinger's added value lies in connecting strategy, people, and daily operations:

- **Direction for change:** A clear framework, shared language, and roadmap for improving asset management.
- **Capability building:** Development of internal change leads through a combination of technical content and soft-skill training.
- **Structured and human approach:** Robust methodologies and risk management combined with a strong focus on culture, communication, and trust.

Partnership Approach

The project was delivered in close partnership with SOCAR Downstream. Bilfinger's team spent extended periods on site to understand operational realities, concerns, and opportunities. This close collaboration enabled effective tailoring of the program to the client's culture and ways of working.

The engagement reflects Bilfinger's approach to sustainable change: combining technical expertise with deep organizational understanding to deliver lasting results.

