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Reuters, Monday February 9 2009



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By Tom Bergin

Feb 9 (Reuters) - Royal Dutch Shell Plc is pushing ahead with aims to grow in the Middle East, despite a tough climate for investment due to lower oil prices and a climate that will force it to cut some support roles in Dubai.

Raoul Restucci, Shell's head of exploration and production for the Middle East, told Reuters that between 40 and 50 roles may be relocated from Dubai to centres in Glasgow, Krakow and Kuala Lumpur.

"We are looking at streamlining some of the support services in our Dubai regional office," he said.

However, this will not impact Shell's efforts to grow its oil and gas production business in the region.

"We have very significant operations across region and there is no retrenchment," he said in a telephone interview from Dubai.

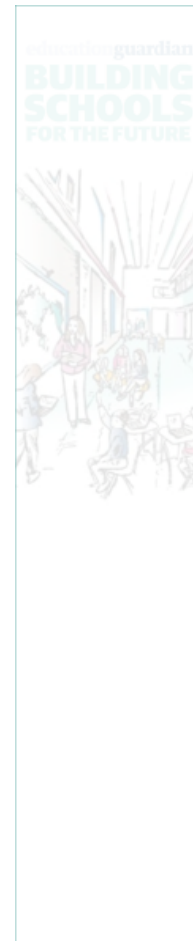
"We've got our teams still working at Kuwait options, still working at Iran options. It's a tough environment but we're still working," he said.

Earlier, some employees posted comments on Shell protest website royaldutchshellplc.com saying up to half the jobs at the Dubai operation could go. Dubai is a regional centre for Shell, with more than 600 staff, Restucci said.

The roles to be cut are mainly in human resources and financial services, Restucci said.

In late January, Shell's overall exploration boss Malcolm Brinded sent an email to staff urging sharp spending cuts, to respond to the \$100/barrel drop in crude prices since July. (Editing by Andrew Macdonald)

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