

Haynes Boone Advises KAUST in Connection with Shipbuilding Contract for RV Thuwal II

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Haynes Boone London Partner [Andreas Dracoulis](#) and Counsel [Mette Duffy](#) advised King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) in connection with a shipbuilding contract for the construction of a research vessel. The vessel, which will be known as RV Thuwal II, will be constructed by Freire Shipyard at its yard in Vigo, Spain.

With an expected completion in 2026, RV Thuwal II will be the flagship of the Saudi research vessel fleet and available to serve all marine research interests of the nation, including giga-projects and government ministries. RV Thuwal II will have the capacity to explore all the major scientific interests of the Red Sea, such as coral reefs, other marine life and geological formations, which will both strengthen Saudi research and attract more international partners.

"RV Thuwal II symbolizes KAUST's commitment to enhancing Saudi Arabia's research infrastructure and the exploration of the Red Sea," said KAUST Vice President of Research Pierre Magistretti [in a prepared statement](#). "The ship will be accessible to partners with a shared interest in understanding the Red Sea and unlocking its vast potential."

RV Thuwal II will also be able to support national responses to emergencies like oil spills and marine and aviation accidents in the Red Sea. The new ship will be capable of exploring the deepest parts of the Red Sea and of deploying a variety of remotely operated vehicles and autonomous underwater vehicles to conduct visual and acoustic surveys, sample seawater and map the seafloor.

"This project reflects our commitment to supporting clients in advancing their research and operational capabilities," said Dracoulis. "We are thrilled to be assisting KAUST to expand its capacity for marine exploration and its ability to respond to critical environmental emergencies in the Red Sea."

Dracoulis and Duffy advise clients in the energy, construction and shipping sectors. Dracoulis is a recommended lawyer in the shipping section of the 2022-2024 editions of The Legal 500 U.K. (Legalease).