Exploring for hydrocarbons in mature basins as well as in frontier areas have specific challenges but require a common approach. In mature areas, easy and obvious objectives have already been targeted whereas in frontier basins, choices and decisions have to be made on very little data. In both scenarios de-risking plays and polarizing a portfolio of opportunities should be based on a good knowledge of the entire geological evolution and its impact on the various play elements. At the base of this knowledge lies the understanding the plate tectonic development that requires reviewing a region in a wider context.

Specifically for this conference, two important plate tectonic events and their implications for Arabian geology and play concepts will be reviewed:
1. The basement and the early, ‘Pan-African’ amalgamation history
2. The Pangea break-up and Mesozoic to Cenozoic plate history

This first contribution summarises the formation history of the Gondwana Supercontinent and the impact of Pan-African lineaments on Phanerozoic sedimentation patterns. Subsequently, the differences in Proterozoic and Lower Palaeozoic successions across the Arabian Plate are placed in a plate tectonic context.
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