



FOCUS ON TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



AED7 million was a large sum for a project when we were awarded a contract to construct the Palm Beach Hotel in Dubai in 1977. From there, HLG has come a long way, building iconic hotels with contract values running into billions of Dirhams.

From the impressive Burj Al Arab to the recently completed stunning St. Regis Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi, HLG continues to showcase a wide range of capabilities to the tourism and hospitality sector.

This edition of Akhbar AlDar focuses on HLG's strengths and achievements in the construction of tourism and hospitality projects and emphasises our commitment to consistently take on and deliver these sensational projects.

Riad T. Sadik
Chairman

CEO AND MD'S MESSAGE



As one of the leading diversified international contractors in the Middle East and North Africa, with over 30 hotel projects to our credit, HLG continues to build on its strengths - offering world-class construction services to hospitality and tourism clients and operators.

Our impressive track record speaks for itself with the Group having forged close working relationships with most of the leading hotel names in the region.

Either on our own, or through strategic partnerships, we are able to provide a complete suite of services for hospitality projects, taking on projects such as the recently awarded 1,675 room Habtoor Palace Hotels.

HLG has also recently secured two large projects in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and I am confident that these projects are just the start in what will be a major market for us.

Laurie Voyer
CEO and Managing Director

AKHBAR ALDAR

Akhbar AlDar, which in Arabic means "news of the house", is the corporate magazine of the Habtoor Leighton Group (HLG).

HLG is one of the leading diversified international contractors in the Middle East and North Africa. The Group employs more than 25,000 people, making it one of the largest construction groups in the region.

HLG is part of the Leighton Group, Australia's largest project development and contracting group with annual revenues exceeding US\$18 billion. The Leighton Group's major shareholder is HOCHTIEF AG, the world's largest international contractor.

HLG focuses on five core market sectors:

Infrastructure

Building

Rail

Oil and Gas

Mining

The Group also operates a diverse range of complementary Associated Businesses, offering clients a one-stop solution for all their construction, development and asset management needs.

HLG has an extensive track record in large-scale projects across the region. For more than 40 years it has built a strong and loyal client base across both the public and private sectors.

Cover picture: The Kempinski Hotel and Residences Palm Jumeirah, Dubai.

HLG JV awarded SAR633 million (US\$169 million) mine-related infrastructure project in Saudi Arabia

HLG (operating as Leighton Middle East Contracting Company) in joint venture with Dragados Gulf Construction Company /Intecsa Industrial (ACS Group), has been awarded a SAR633 million (US\$169 million) contract in Saudi Arabia for the construction of mine-related infrastructure for the Ma'aden Alcoa Aluminium joint venture's bauxite mine. HLG's share of the contract is worth SAR316 million (US\$85 million).

The project, which is located at Al Ba'itha in a desert landscape, is approximately 200 kilometres north-east of the city of Burayda in the Qassim central region of Saudi Arabia. The mineral from the bauxite mine will be transported by train using the North-South Railway that connects the mine to the aluminium smelter that Ma'aden is constructing at Ras Al Khair.

This new project follows the announcement that HLG had secured in joint venture a SAR2.87 billion (US\$765 million) contract for the design and construction of a new aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility at Jeddah Airport in Saudi Arabia. HLG's share of the MRO project is SAR573 million (US\$153 million).

"This is another very important step for us, as it reinforces our presence in the region's largest construction market," HLG's CEO and Managing Director, Laurie Voyer, said.

"Our strategy involves building successful relationships with regional partners to successfully deliver challenging and unique projects.

"This is another very important step for us, as it reinforces our presence in the region's largest construction market,"

HLG's CEO and Managing Director, Laurie Voyer

"In this instance, we have once again been able to use the Leighton Group's relevant experience in Australia and Asia to our advantage.

"This project allows us an opportunity to synergise our delivery skills with those of our partners in what has previously been a niche market.

"We're delighted to secure our second project in Saudi Arabia this year and are confident of securing other opportunities within the Kingdom in 2012," he said. Work will commence immediately and the project is due for completion by March 2014.

HLG – Dragados Gulf /Intecsa scope of work includes construction of:

- a pioneer fly camp and temporary facilities main camp
- the material handling system – including crushing plant and mechanical conveyors
- a 250 x 200 metre mine village, including accommodation for 200 staff
- connecting roads and utilities

Visit to the mock-up building at the new Mafraq Hospital, Abu Dhabi

The new Mafraq Hospital project welcomed representatives from the Abu Dhabi Health Services Company (SEHA) on a visit to view the mock-up building.

The mock-up building, which was built to showcase examples of finished rooms, includes clinical areas and houses two patient rooms, an examination room, a nurse station and several additional sample rooms. The visiting team was led by SEHA Chief of Facilities and Construction Saif Fadel Al Hameli.

The visit also included an awards ceremony during which SEHA presented awards to individuals working on the project for their performance and efforts to date. The AED2.2 billion (US\$600 million) 738-bed new Mafraq Hospital, located in Al Mafraq, Abu Dhabi, is being constructed by HLG in a joint venture with Murray & Roberts.



(Centre L-R) SEHA Chief, Facilities and Construction, **Saif Fadel Al Hameli**, HLG General Manager, UAE Building **Mahmoud Ghandour**, HLG Senior Project Engineer **Saif Ullah**.

HLG secures AED1.9 billion (US\$515 million) Habtoor Palace Hotels development in Dubai

HLG has been awarded an AED1.9 billion (US\$515 million) contract by the Al Habtoor Group as part of the AED4.875 billion (US\$1.33 billion) Habtoor Palace hotels development in Dubai.

Under the agreement, HLG will be responsible for the construction of what will become the largest integrated hotel complex in the Middle East, comprising a five-level podium, one 36-storey tower and one 25-storey tower within a total GFA of 350,000 square metres. It will include the first St. Regis hotel in Dubai, a W Hotel and a new Westin, and will be managed by Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide.

The landmark development will include:

- 1,675 hotel rooms, spread between three hotels (lifestyle, luxury and main)
- An iconic Las Vegas-style 'aqua' theatre
- A French provincial-inspired garden
- Food and beverage venues

The new development will be located on the site of the Metropolitan Hotel on Sheikh Zayed Road, at the southernmost point of the 'Old Town' development, which includes the Burj Khalifa and the Dubai Mall.

Design for the development commenced on 1 January, with demolition of the existing Metropolitan commencing in April and early works likely to begin in June. The development is scheduled for completion in the second half of 2016.

HLG CEO and Managing Director, Mr Laurie Voyer, said he was delighted to have reached agreement with the Al Habtoor Group on such a large-scale project.

"We have successfully completed a number of projects for the Al Habtoor Group in the past, including the Habtoor Grand Beach Resort & Spa and Metropolitan Palace Hotel.

"We look forward to working with them again in creating another landmark development in Dubai and the broader Middle East.

"Our team has spent the better part of six months working with the team from the Al Habtoor Group to finalise the contract for this prestigious project," he said.

HLG has constructed many of Dubai's most well-known hotels, including the 7-star Burj Al Arab, the Jumeirah Beach Hotel, the Dubai Shangri-la Hotel and the Madinat Jumeirah. Mr Voyer said that the company continues to pursue its strategy of diversification.

"While the Habtoor Palace is a Dubai building project, our future growth will come from major infrastructure projects in markets outside the UAE, particularly Qatar and Saudi Arabia. We are continuing our push into new geographies," he said.

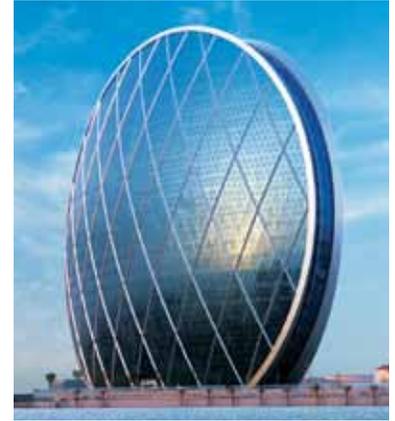


Signatories at the contract signing: Front Row (L-R) Laurie Voyer, CEO and Managing Director, Habtoor Leighton Group, Mohammed Khalaf Al Habtoor, Vice Chairman and CEO, Al Habtoor Group Back Row (L-R) Martyn Wilde, Projects Director, Al Habtoor Group, Riad T. Sadik, Chairman, Habtoor Leighton Group, Khalaf Al Habtoor, Chairman, Al Habtoor Group, Yusef Shalabi, Director of Projects and Real Estate, Al Habtoor Group, Rob Johnstone, Group General Manager, Habtoor Leighton Group, Commercial, Risk & Integrated Business Systems

New UAE and Oman Office

HLG's new UAE and Oman Office in Abu Dhabi is now up and running at the HQ building in Al Raha beach development. A spectacular building with an incredible view, HLG occupies the entire eighth floor of the instantly recognisable 'disc' building.

The new office is headed by Executive General Manager, UAE and Oman Mark Scorer and is the focal point for all HLG's business in the UAE and Oman.



Duhail Project handover ahead of schedule

HLG has handed over the reservoir and pumping station (RPS) milestone one (MS1) project in Duhail, Qatar, with the Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (KAHRAMAA) connecting the Duhail RPS to the water network. The pumping station, one 21MIG reservoir and associated pipelines were commissioned into service nearly four weeks ahead of the scheduled date.

HLG is constructing a total of six concrete reservoirs, a pump house, associated buildings, road works, and landscaping for the Duhail Water Station project. The scope of work also includes the installation of a 15.9 kilometre water distribution pipeline and a control and instrumentation system.

The project is part of the US\$210 million (QAR751 million) development of new and independent water infrastructure facilities in the Duhail and Umm Qarn communities on the outskirts of Doha.



Work begins on the Jabal Akhdar Alila Resort

HLG (operating as Leighton Middle East LLC) is constructing the Jabal Akhdar Alila Resort in Oman for Omran, the Omani-government-owned tourism development, investment, and hospitality Management Company.

The resort comprises 78 rooms, six suites and two royal villas, and is being constructed in co-operation with local contractor Dawood Contracting. Work began in December 2011, with completion expected in the fourth quarter of 2013.

Located in Jabal Akhdar, the resort is perched on a mountain top overlooking a dramatic gorge, with the majestic profiles of the Hajar Mountains visible in the distance.



Australia Gulf Council (AGC) delegates visit the UAE

The AGC is an organisation that aims to increase trade and investment between the Gulf States and Australia. Composed of government, corporate and diplomatic members, a core part of its programme is its Annual Business Mission, during which a number of its delegates visit the UAE.

This year the delegation was headed by the Honourable Mark Vaile, the Honourable Senator Nicholas Sherry, Chief Executive of the AGC the Honourable Michael Yabsley, Australian Ambassador to the UAE His Excellency Pablo Kang, and several heads of Australian companies, including Servcorp, Tamas Projects, R.M. Williams Agricultural Holdings, Leighton Holdings and Platinum Asset Management.

HLG is a major sponsor of the AGC. Al Habtoor Group (AHG) Chairman Khalaf Al Habtoor welcomed delegates to his office in Dubai to discuss investment opportunities. Also present were AHG Vice-Chairman and CEO Mohammed Al Habtoor, HLG CEO and Managing Director Laurie Voyer and a number of AHG board members and HLG representatives.



HLG declared GCC Winner at the 2012 MEED Quality Awards for Projects

HLG has been awarded the GCC Metito Social Project of the Year award at the MEED Quality Awards for Projects 2012. HLG won the award for constructing the Saadiyat Construction Village, Abu Dhabi, which was one of eight projects from the UAE to be declared national winners in March.

The US\$260 million Saadiyat Construction Village was constructed for the Tourism Development & Investment Company (TDIC) and was completed in 2010. It houses construction workers and operational staff in 56 accommodation buildings across four clusters and is designed to international standards for space, food preparation and laundry facilities.



HLG JV awarded SAR2.87 billion (US\$765 million) Aircraft Maintenance Facility Project in Saudi Arabia

HLG, in joint venture with TAV and Al Rajhi, has been awarded a SAR2.87 billion (US\$765 million) contract in Saudi Arabia for the design and construction of a new maintenance, repair and overhaul facility (MRO) for Saudia Aerospace and Engineering Industries (SAEI). HLG's share of the contract is worth SAR573 million (US\$153 million).

The project, which is located within the King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, is part of an overall SAR27 billion (US\$7.2 billion) expansion plan to increase the airport's capacity from 13 million to 80 million passengers per year by 2035.

HLG CEO and Managing Director, Laurie Voyer, said this project was typical of some of the new work opportunities that HLG was pursuing in the region and reflected the Group's growth strategy to expand into new geographic markets.

"This is a very important project for HLG. Our strategy is based on diversifying our workload by both geography and work type - working with clients who place a high value on our complete service offer.

"This project is our first major project in Saudi Arabia, and we are pleased to be able to leverage off the Leighton Group's Australian and Asian experience in delivering airport infrastructure, and apply this knowledge to a new market.

"Saudi Arabia is a key growth market for HLG. It is by far the largest market in the Middle East and close to US\$50 billion worth of projects will be awarded there this year," he said.

Mr Voyer said that HLG expected to secure further work in the Kingdom this year. "We're confident that this is the first of a number of projects we will secure in Saudi Arabia in 2012," he said.

The JV's scope of work includes the design and construction of:

- 11 aircraft maintenance hangars, with clear spans up to 160 metres
- maintenance, ancillary buildings and workshops comprising 343,000 square metres of built-up area

- all electro-mechanical and special equipment required for a modern automated MRO facility
- corresponding aprons, taxiways and airfield infrastructure works

The MRO facility will service all types of modern aircraft, including the latest A380 and B747 models and will be one of the largest MRO

facilities in the Middle East. SAEI also retains an option to increase the facility by a further 150,000 square metres, which includes a further nine hangars.

Design and enabling works are expected to commence immediately, with the facility due for completion in October 2014 following a 30 month design and construct period.

SAEI is part of Saudi Arabian Airlines Group.

"This is a very important project for HLG. Our strategy is based on diversifying our workload by both geography and work type - working with clients who place a high value on our complete service offer."

HLG's CEO and Managing Director, Laurie Voyer



THEY SAID IT

“DTCM has been successfully promoting and marketing Dubai to boost the tourism industry in overseas markets. The WTA recognition endorses the wide support and appreciation we have been enjoying from the travel industry.”

Majid Al Marri, DTCM Director of Classification while speaking about the awards received by Dubai at the 2012 World Travel Awards (WTA's). Dubai secured three awards at the event. The recently opened St. Regis Saadiyat Island Resort, Abu Dhabi built by HLG received the award for “Abu Dhabi's Leading Beach Resort.”

“The opportunities are significant and the challenges are also as significant.”

Taleb Rifai, Secretary General of the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) while speaking at the Arabian Travel Market in Dubai. He said tourism to the Middle East and North Africa is expected to reach 195 million visitors by 2030, up from 18 million in 1990.

“The DMA's building code and Environment Health & Safety Management system for the construction sector provides a robust regulatory framework to deliver safe, quality and environmentally sustainable buildings.”

Matthew Plumbridge, consultant for environment and sustainability planning at the Abu Dhabi Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA). He participated in a panel discussion at WORLD ecoConstruct in Abu Dhabi.

“The design of the project has been completed and this means it is going ahead and will be completed on schedule.”

Nassir Al Suwaidi Etihad Rail's Chairman was talking about the design of the Trans-UAE train that would be operated by Etihad Rail. Train cars are scheduled to be delivered at the end of 2012. In April Abu Dhabi-based Etihad Rail said that the project would link the UAE's two main cities-Dubai and Abu Dhabi - in 2016 before it is extended to other cities.

“Moving to a regional work system would allow the skilled workers and labour to move freely between the GCC countries and thus maintain stability and create flexibility. The cycles in different countries don't always happen at the same time. The suggestion of implementing a GCC-wide working permit could be expedited because otherwise, these projects will have constraints.”

Dr Ghassan Ziadet, Director of Infrastructure (UAE) and Regional Head of Bridges, Middle East and India at Atkins while talking about the importance of social infrastructure projects in the region.

“Our hotels are from 80 to 90 percent occupied, with an average room rate in Dubai of \$400.”

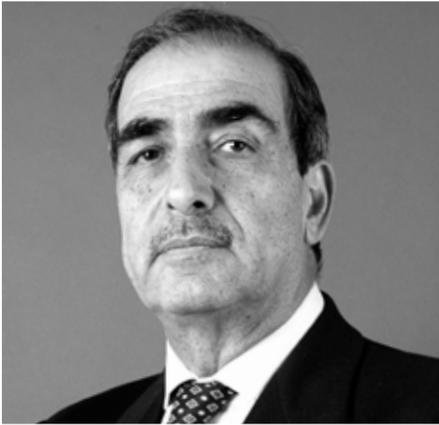
Khalaf Al Habtoor, Chairman of Al Habtoor Group, while talking about the Group's hotel properties. Al Habtoor Group recently announced that the \$1.3 billion Habtoor Palace Hotels complex will be managed by Starwoods Hotels and Resorts Worldwide and will include the first St. Regis hotel in Dubai, a W Hotel and a new Westin. HLG is currently working on the project.

BUILDING FOR THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Habtoor Leighton Group is a top-tier hotel and resort specialist and we have acquired significant experience in the construction of hotel developments across the Middle East and North Africa.



Burj Al Arab, Dubai



Mahmoud Ghandour
General Manager, UAE Building

Having worked with most of the hospitality brand operators in the region, we understand their approach and philosophy and we are able to join them in working towards this.

With our impressive track record of hospitality projects, large pool of qualified and experienced in-house resources, strong supply chain partnerships, intrinsic knowledge of local markets and arsenal of specialist associated businesses for support, HLG is well placed to offer clients superior service.

HLG's past and current project portfolio includes more than

30 hotels and resorts

20 projects rated five-star or higher

10,000 hotel rooms

20 ballrooms

200 hotel restaurants

HLG has built long-term relationships with many of the large developers in the region, working with them on multiple projects. The Group has, to its credit, over 30 current and completed hotels and resorts in the region.

A majority of these developments are five-star hotels, with an average built-up area of 100,000 square metres, or more than 300 room keys. Large projects such as the Jumeirah Beach Hotel, completed in 1997, can reach a total of 600 guest rooms or more, while the Habtoor Palace Hotels development will include 1,675 rooms.

Beginning with the construction of the Palm Beach Hotel in Dubai, which was completed in 1977, we have delivered several monumental hotels. In Dubai these include the Burj Al Arab, Madinat Jumeirah, Jumeirah Beach Hotel, Dusit Thani and Kempinski Hotel and Residences; while in Abu Dhabi they include the St. Regis Saadiyat Island Resort Abu Dhabi and the Al Raha Beach Hotel. Also notable in Qatar are the Renaissance Doha City Centre Hotel and the Courtyard by Marriott Doha City Centre Hotel.

Current projects include hotels at the Dubai Pearl and Habtoor Palace Hotels in Dubai; the Ritz Carlton Abu Dhabi, Grand Canal and Accor Abu Dhabi; and the Shangri-La, Merweb and Rotana at Doha City Centre, Doha. We are currently tendering for several large hotel projects in the region.

HLG's design and build solutions incorporate luxury guest rooms, suites and exclusive penthouses with ballrooms and convention

centres. In addition, HLG's hotel developments include beach clubs, health spas, restaurants, retail and entertainment facilities.

A large number of sub-contractors and specialist suppliers are involved when it comes to the construction and fit-out of a hotel, and interior finishes and mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) works play a key role. HLG is supported by a list of key associated businesses, established through joint ventures with leaders in their specific industries, who are able to handle specialist areas of hotel construction.

Habtoor Leighton Group Interiors (HLGI) provides complete turn-key design and fit-out solutions, specialist design and joinery workmanship. They have completed major interiors works at the Burj Al Arab, St. Regis Saadiyat Island Resort Abu Dhabi, Grand Millennium Dubai and Arjaan by Rotana Dubai Media City, to name a few.

Habtoor Leighton Specon (HLS) provides a complete suite of MEP works as well as energy and power works and has completed works at the Mövenpick Hotel Jumeirah Beach, Grand Millennium Hotel and the Kempinski Hotel and Residences Palm Jumeirah. HLS has over 5,000 employees in the region and is currently working on several hotels at Doha City Centre, Qatar.

Other associated businesses specialise in steel design, fabrication and erection, foundation engineering, environmental services and facilities management. HLG draws on the →



Desert Islands Resort and Spa by Anantara, Abu Dhabi



“HLG has built long-term relationships with many of the large developers in the region, working with them on multiple projects.”

support of these businesses when required, and is able to offer hospitality clients a one-stop solution for all their construction needs.

Hotels that have a large foot-print tend to have a great deal of associated infrastructure. Many of the region's developments include leisure facilities such as golf courses and retail elements. In 2010 HLG completed the 18-hole Gary Player-designed Saadiyat Beach Golf Course which includes a golf academy and maintenance buildings.

The construction of a hospitality project comes with unique challenges. At the tendering stage value engineering and determining the level of detail in kitchens, rooms, ballrooms, food and beverage outlets is as important as the Front of House, and having an operator involved at an early stage is also a great advantage as all their requirements can be taken into consideration from the outset.

Milestones are also crucial as these must be met by a number of parties to ensure the timely opening of the hotel. The timely ordering and delivery of furniture, fixtures and equipment (FF&E) is a must. Hotels also undergo frequent design changes during any stage of construction and the snagging and de-snagging procedures that ensure consistent quality are crucial. With our expertise in hotel projects, we are able to foresee and circumvent many of these challenges.

The region is witnessing a hub of new hospitality projects specifically in GCC countries. The UAE is well known for this continuous expansion and lately the focus is shifting towards the northern Emirates. The World Cup in Qatar will also bring hospitality developments to the entire region, with an overall increase in tourism across the region. The Habtoor Palace Hotels alone will have over 1,600 rooms under one development, and this is a sign of the scale of projects to come.

HLG has delivered numerous large-scale hotel developments and the business specialises in combining region-specific design elements with modern architectural features and finishes.

Our design and build experience incorporates royal suites, luxury guest rooms, ball rooms, penthouses, luxury hotel apartments, convention centres and world-class restaurants. These attributes, coupled with our inherent focus on health and safety, quality and the environment, as well as our ability to mobilise the best resources to deliver on a wide range of contracts, uniquely positions HLG to take on the challenges offered by the next generation of hotels and resorts in the region.

Through its long history, HLG has worked closely with the world's leading hotel operators.





The St. Regis Saadiyat Island Resort, Abu Dhabi was constructed for the Tourism Development and Investment Company, and is located adjacent to the Gary Player-designed 72-par Saadiyat Beach Golf Course. The resort comprises 380 luxury hotel rooms, 259 residential apartments and 33 luxury residential villas. The project also features a retail and entertainment component, a health and racquet club, a health spa and 1,600 structured parking bays. It was recently honoured as “Abu Dhabi’s Leading Beach Resort” at the 19th Middle East World Travel Awards. The hotel and banquet hall were completed in November 2011, with the rest of the project scheduled for completion in 2012.



HLG IS THE MAIN CONTRACTOR FOR THE DOHA CITY CENTRE EXPANSION IN DOHA, QATAR.

The project involves the construction of five towers for Al Rayyan Tourism Investment Company with a direct link to the existing Doha City Centre Mall, one of the largest malls in the Gulf. The project comprises two hotel towers in Phase 2 at the west end and three hotel towers in Phase 3 at the east end of the mall. The total built-up area is around 330,000 square metres with the combined podiums having a footprint of 27,000 square metres. The five towers have a combined footprint of 10,000 square metres narrowing to 700 square metres at the top of each tower.

The scope of work on Phase 2 included the reinforced concrete structure, external cladding with a glazed curtain walling system, mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) services, a conveying system and soft and hard landscaping. This is for the 50 storey, 258 room Renaissance Doha City Centre Hotel and the 50 storey tower housing both the 204 room Courtyard by Marriott and the 124 room Marriott Executive Apartments.

Phase 3 comprises construction of the 50 storey, 272 guest room, Shangri-La Hotel Doha; the 50 storey City Centre Rotana Hotel with 300 guest rooms and 100 apartments; and the 48-storey Merwebhotel with 256 guest rooms and 97 apartments.

HLG is also constructing Traders Doha, which is a mixed-use hotel and serviced apartments tower. The building will reach a height of 152 metres and will house a 238 hotel rooms and 84 serviced apartments. The scope of work includes construction of the 34 level tower, two basement parking floors, a ground floor, an atrium and function and ballroom facilities. The project will also include a swimming pool, health club, restaurant and food and beverage facilities.

TOURISM DRIVES CONSTRUCTION BOOM IN MIDDLE EAST

As destinations across the Middle East seek to diversify their economies away from a dependence on natural resources, tourism is emerging as the big winner. **Breaking Travel News** editor Christopher O'Toole takes a closer look.

We have all read the headlines proclaiming Qatar to be the next global construction hotspot. The Middle Eastern destination has outlined plans to spend as much as US\$100 billion – more than three quarters of its annual GDP – on infrastructure developments over the next few years as part of the ambitious National Vision 2030 plan. Winning hosting rights to the FIFA 2022 World Cup will accelerate the process and, with Doha still in the running for the 2020 Olympic Games, there could still be more to come.

But this is just the tip of the sand-dune. A boom in prices for natural resources has fuelled a wave of construction across the region. The headline grabbing Burj Khalifa and mooted 1,000 metre-tall Kingdom Tower in Saudi Arabia are just two of the most obvious symbols of a widespread and sustained glut of building work.

However, outside of this frenzy of construction, there has also been a dawning understanding that the resources-led boom will not last forever. Much as Norway has been squirreling away a percentage of its oil revenue for when the well runs dry, Middle Eastern nations have been seeking to rebalance their economies. Tourism has been one of the main beneficiaries of this trend.

Leading Lights of Middle Eastern Tourism

In the United Arab Emirates, Dubai led the way. A rush to become the destination for international holidaymakers saw the ruling Al Maktoum family pump billions into new roads, airports, harbours and hotels. Some 13,200 new rooms are presently under construction in the emirate, with suppliers confident demand will be sufficient to make new properties viable.

The emirate is also developing a reputation as something of a safe haven in a region rocked by insecurity, with Al Habtoor Group unveiling the \$1.33 billion mega project - Habtoor Palace - earlier this year.

Khalid bin Sulayem, Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing director general, explained "The stellar performance of Dubai's tourism industry is a testimony to the aggressive promotional and marketing drive the department has been pursuing to enhance the number of tourists to the destination by tapping established and emerging markets across the world."

Even Dubai's impressive numbers pale next to those of Saudi Arabia, which last year saw the total value of hotel construction contracts awarded hit some \$66 billion, a six per cent increase on the previous year.

According to research from MEED Insight, this means the destination is now by far the largest projects market in the region, worth almost as much as the other five GCC states combined. With more than \$300 billion worth of projects planned and un-awarded, the kingdom is also by far the largest future projects market.

A large percentage of this spending will go toward tourism, with Saudi Arabian authorities looking to exploit the destination's position as the focal point of the Hajj. "For most companies and professionals involved in the regional projects market the sheer size and potential of the Saudi Arabia projects market makes it the number one opportunity in the region," said Ed James, head of MEED Insight.

Abu Dhabi – which recently saw annual visitor numbers pass two million for the first time – was also an early beneficiary of the move toward tourism. Yas Marina Circuit, and accompanying Yas Viceroy Hotel, will later this year welcome the fourth Abu Dhabi Formula 1 Grand Prix, while Ferrari World and the eagerly awaited Louvre Abu Dhabi and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi on Saadiyat Islands, are just some of the examples of tourism-led construction.

Visitor numbers are increasing all the time, with the emirate seeking to welcome 2.2 million guests to its 120 plus luxury hotels in 2012.

Qatar will also be vital, with the coming 12 months effectively marking the start of major awards on the World Cup infrastructure programme.

The market is likely to deliver \$15-17 billion worth of contract awards this year before rising to \$25-30 billion in 2013. Rail will be the largest component of the spending, accounting for some \$35 billion.

The first packages for the expanding Doha metro are expected to be placed by the end of 2012. Up to \$30 billion is planned for investment in road infrastructure, with the focus on the highway network and the Doha Bay crossing while the New Doha International Airport, scheduled to open in late 2012, is preparing for a new round of investment.

The destination has also been seeking to boost its cultural offering, with Katara Cultural Village, the Mathaf Arab Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Islamic Art all built in recent years in an attempt to woo guests.





Phase 1 of the exhibition halls and other facilities at ADNEC, Abu Dhabi

DESTINATION: ABU DHABI

Abu Dhabi is fast becoming a must-visit emirate of the UAE. The numbers speak for themselves. Figures just released by Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority show that during the first two months of this year, Abu Dhabi's hotel guest numbers were up 16% on the same period last year – standing at around 382,500, while guest nights rose 12% to just over 1.1million.

Sultan Al Dhaheri, the authority's Tourism and Corporate Planning Section Head, believes there are many reasons why Abu Dhabi is attracting more interest than ever before.

"Last year, Abu Dhabi received 2.1 million hotel guests – 100,000 more than we were targeting.

"And we are confident that with Etihad flying to more destinations, as well as a substantially expanded tourist offer within Abu Dhabi, we will achieve our targets because it's now much easier to get to Abu Dhabi and there's much more to see and do once you get here."

So, where are all these guests coming from?

Domestic tourism is continuing its growth cycle, as are guest arrivals from Abu Dhabi's

neighbouring GCC countries, in particular, Saudi Arabia. But it is the UK, India and Germany that have been identified as amongst the top source markets, due in no small part to Etihad's increased frequency and the entry of other airlines into the market.

The opening of many new high-end resorts such as the St. Regis, Park Hyatt and Monte Carlo Beach Club on Saadiyat Beach, coupled with the new Manarat Al Saadiyat exhibition centre and the Saadiyat Beach Golf Club, cements Abu Dhabi's position as a beach, golf and cultural hub.

"Abu Dhabi's new supply of hotel, entertainment and leisure facilities come in anticipation of the rapid and ambitious growth of the tourism sector over the next few years, which is all part of the economic diversification plan of the Abu Dhabi government," said Mr Al Dhaheri.

One such facility, the Manarat Al Saadiyat exhibition centre, is currently home to the Treasures of the World's Cultures exhibition which is being staged in collaboration with the British Museum until mid-July. It features regional loans from the Al Ain National Museum and Sharjah Archaeology Museum, and is one of a series of exhibitions and events being held at Manarat.

"Over the next five years, four major attractions will open in Abu Dhabi, starting in 2012 with the UAE's largest waterpark on Yas Island, followed in 2015 by the Louvre Abu Dhabi, 2016 Zayed National Museum and 2017 Guggenheim," added Mr Al Dhaheri.

As a major events destination, Abu Dhabi is continuing to make a name for itself, and in addition to Ferrari World and the headline F1 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, Abu Dhabi recently secured hosting the 16th World Conference on Tobacco or Health in 2015 and the Asia Pacific Cardiologist Conference for the same year and the World Travel & Tourism Summit to be held next year.

In fact, Mr Al Dhaheri believes that this year's growth is being maintained in part by Abu Dhabi's hosting of February's World Ophthalmology Congress 2012, the world's longest running international medical convention and the largest business event ever staged in the UAE capital, which attracted in excess of 10,000 participants.

"We see the opportunity in Meeting, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) segments and are continuing to work with stakeholders to increase the length of stay and produce an increasing range of specialised products targeting golf, beach,

nature and adventure to offer our visiting guests.

"These events, and the many more ranging from golf championships to gourmet food festivals, play a significant role in the impression that Abu Dhabi will leave on the rest of the world."

Hallmarked by its focus on culture, heritage and the environment, Abu Dhabi is a destination where all visitors can engage with Abu Dhabi's much-treasured heritage and traditions.

With its 400 kilometres of coastline, 200 natural islands, spectacular desert experiences, politically-stable and virtually crime-free environment, Abu Dhabi was recently voted, by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators as 'Destination of The Year Middle East and Africa 2012'.

And whilst the emirate offers direct connectivity to over 60 cities worldwide through the UAE national carrier Etihad Airways, it is definitely a destination that warrants its own time and focus amongst travellers.

"Last year, Abu Dhabi received 2.1 million hotel guests – 100,000 more than we were targeting."

Sultan Al Dhaheri, the authority's Tourism and Corporate Planning Section Head



The Park Inn by Radisson Yas Island Hotel and the Radisson Blu Hotel Yas Island, Abu Dhabi



THE SCIENCE OF ICONIC BUILDINGS

The Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre's (ADNEC) gravity-defying Capital Gate combines iconic architecture with outstanding function, meeting the needs of corporate tenants as well as the five-star Hyatt Capital Gate hotel and its guests. Kevin Charlton, Director of Projects Development at ADNEC and a qualified chartered engineer (MCIBSE), has overseen several projects for the company but none as high profile and as complex as Capital Gate. HLG has been working closely with Kevin as the main contractor for the construction of the tower.

We catch up with Kevin to ask him about the intricacies of constructing this new landmark.

Describe the development process for hospitality-related projects at ADNEC

Project ideas are always based on ADNEC's and the markets requirements, and in line with our overall strategy to become one of the best

events destinations in the world. That means we need to offer the best quality facilities and as well as the supporting infrastructure. Whether the initial idea originates within the ADNEC team or from our board of directors, the objective is always the same.

Hospitality projects have to pass a rigorous investment analysis and validation process to ensure they are aligned with our core business. Once a project has passed this stage, we seek potential partners or work with our in-house

Kevin Charlton

Director, Projects Development at ADNEC

hospitality team to develop the concept into an outline business plan.

Projects that meet all requirements and receive board approval proceed to the concept development, design, procurement and construction process. By the design stage, we expect to have an operator on board to be part of the design development process.

Typically we expect hospitality projects to take shape over three to three-and-a-half years. It is a process in which all of the key partners involved including the hotel operator, the contractor, engineers and client teams have to work together to ensure that from enabling works to testing, commissioning and final handover, the process is as smooth as possible. The soft opening phase then allows the operator to test the final product and services ahead of the official opening. It is critical the end product meets expectations as you never have a second chance at a first impression.

What are the special considerations when constructing a hotel and how do these differ from other building jobs?

There is a considerable difference when it comes to constructing hotels especially with the quality of finishes and increased importance of testing and commissioning in the handover process.

Assuming the quality of work from the contractor meets expectations, a hotel operator should be able to operate the property from day one. An operator cannot do this without the appropriate drawings, operation and maintenance manuals, training and other procedures and this is as important as the construction of the hotel.

Interior finishes and mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP), specifically fire and life safety, building management systems (BMS's) and environmental control systems play a major role in hotel projects as these are essential for client safety and satisfaction.

What is the importance of the client, consultant, contractor and operator relationship?

If you want a very high-end hotel, such as the Hyatt Capital Gate, the operator has to be involved in the design. The hotel's needs from

a service and operational perspective must be built into the design, or you will be faced with issues later down the line with endless changes and modifications.

Whenever possible, we like to have the contractor involved at the design stage of a project as they can provide critical practical input at this stage. We always make decisions with the input and advice from engineers, hotel operators, contractor and cost consultants in order to arrive at a balanced and well-informed decision.

Critically, we all have to work together and cooperate to make the project a success. We create the property for our operator of choice and build the hotel the customer wants. We approach the process with an open mind, i.e., if the operator gets the facilities they want then this results in better revenues for the client.

What do you look for in a contractor?

When it comes to hospitality, we work with contractors that are well established in our local market and have relevant recent experience from similar projects. We also consider working with organisations that have invested in hospitality projects, as this signals that they have a good understanding of the business.

At the pre-qualification stage, we filter out all contractors without previous experience in hotels as we look for the best contractor for the job.

Most building or construction is not difficult – although Capital Gate is a different story - and what we see as the tough part is the ability to achieve second-to-none quality of finishing. We look for the contractor that can provide the best range of services either through in-house teams or through established partnerships.

We look very closely at relationships between contractors and their sub-contractors. A good safety record is non-negotiable, and we consider safety and quality to go hand-in-hand. We carry out site inspections of existing sites to see for ourselves how a contractor acts on site.

What challenges did you face with Capital Gate and how did you address these?

Capital Gate is such a unique building, so there were plenty of challenges. You must remember that this type of design has never been done before. The team were faced with many unique challenges in the design development

process. Solutions were developed during the construction which required cooperation from all involved parties, so that we could together tackle the challenges.

We instigated 'partnering workshops' where all parties came together to discuss concerns and collaborate on solutions. These workshops proved invaluable when it came to resolving issues, taking decisions and getting buy-in from all parties.

We also appointed a Transition Manager (TM), an independent role separate from all other site teams. The TM took on a client-representative role with the sole focus of getting the whole building ready for operations. The TM communicated directly with contractors, sub-contractors, specialist contractors and the operations team, and remains active up until the end of the defects liability period.

Having a TM with a strong background in facilities management proved invaluable to the smooth running and completion of the

project, particularly given the attention to detail required for such a prestigious building.

HLG have previously constructed the first phase of the exhibition halls at ADNEC, and the level of trust and confidence already established with them was beneficial to the smooth working of the project.

What are your views looking forward?

ADNEC continues to go from strength to strength. In recent months we have seen both Hyatt Capital Gate and the Premier Inn Capital Centre open which means ADNEC visitors now have a choice of three hotels, each serving a different market segment from three-star to five-star. Capital Gate and International Tower has also added Grade A office space to the mix, offering the ideal business location with meeting and conference facilities, hotels, F&B and business services all on the doorstep of Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre.

ADNEC and Hyatt Capital Gate Abu Dhabi



The Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) is the largest conference and exhibition venue in the Middle East. In 2011, ADNEC saw a 56% year-on-year increase as its total number of events shot up to 231 from 148 in 2010, and it welcomes more than 1 million visitors annually to a wide variety of exhibitions and events. This growth was attributed to ADNEC's commitment to providing world-class services and facilities to organisers and visitors, and ADNEC is expecting to see another year of growth in 2012.

A key driver of the huge strides Abu Dhabi is making in business tourism, ADNEC works closely with other stakeholders to grow the events industry, which is already a significant revenue generator for the whole city. An asset such as Capital Gate adds to the Abu Dhabi product and gives the destination an instantly recognisable landmark.

Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Centre was recently named Best Purpose Built Venue at the 2012 Middle East Events Awards. In the past year, ADNEC has won more than 20 global industry awards including 'International Venue of the Year' (ADNEC) at the AEO Awards (Association of Events Organisers), as well as being named highly commended in the Venue Sustainable Initiative of the Year category; 'Exhibition Venue of the Year,' (ExCeL) at the Events Awards 2011, and World's Leading Meetings & Conference Venue (ExCeL) at the World Travel Awards 2011.

A HISTORY OF DISTINCTIV

HLG continues to build iconic projects for the tourism and hospitality sector, with over 30 projects to its credit.



1977	1979	1985	1997	1998	1999	2003	2004
<p>Palm Beach Hotel <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p> <hr/> <p>Nova Park Hotel <i>Sharjah, UAE</i></p>	<p>Metropolitan Hotel Dubai <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p>	<p>Evason Ma'in Hot Springs <i>Jordan</i></p>	<p>Metropolitan Palace Hotel <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p> <hr/> <p>Armed Forces Officers Club and Hotel <i>Abu Dhabi, UAE</i></p>	<p>Jumeirah Beach Hotel <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p> <hr/> <p>Metropolitan Hotel Deira <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p>	<p>Burj Al Arab <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p> <hr/> <p>Dusit Thani <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p>	<p>Shangri-La Hotel <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p>	<p>Four Seasons Alexandria, Egypt</p> <hr/> <p>Al Raha Beach Hotel <i>Abu Dhabi, UAE</i></p>

E HOTEL PROJECTS



2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2011	2012	PROJECTS DUE FOR COMPLETION POST 2012 ▶
<p>Madinat Jumeirah <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p> <p>Habtoor Grand Beach Resort & Spa <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p>	<p>BurJuman Arjaan by Rotana <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p>	<p>Grand Millennium Hotel <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p> <p>Arjaan by Rotana Dubai Media City <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p> <p>Mövenpick Hotel Jumeirah Beach <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p>	<p>Desert Islands Resort and Spa by Anantara <i>Abu Dhabi, UAE</i></p>	<p>Park Inn by Radisson Yas Island Hotel <i>Abu Dhabi, UAE</i></p> <p>Radisson Blu Hotel Yas Island <i>Abu Dhabi, UAE</i></p>	<p>Courtyard by Marriott Doha City Centre Hotel <i>Doha, Qatar</i></p> <p>Renaissance Doha City Centre Hotel <i>Doha, Qatar</i></p> <p>Kempinski Hotel Palm Jumeirah <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p> <p>Business Bay Hotel <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p>	<p>Ritz Carlton Abu Dhabi Grand Canal <i>Abu Dhabi, UAE</i></p> <p>City Centre Rotana Hotel <i>Doha, Qatar</i></p> <p>Merwebhotel City Centre <i>Doha, Qatar</i></p> <p>Shangri-La Hotel <i>Doha, Qatar</i></p> <p>St. Regis Saadiyat Island Resort <i>Abu Dhabi, UAE</i></p>	<p>Traders Doha <i>Doha, Qatar</i></p> <p>Dubai Pearl <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p> <p>Habtoor Palace Hotels <i>Dubai, UAE</i></p> <p>Jebel Akhdar Alila Resort <i>Oman</i></p>

PUTTIN' ON THE RITZ

Project Director at the Ritz Carlton Abu Dhabi, Grand Canal, Craig Bowtell, is part of HLG's UAE building division – a team of experienced and highly skilled construction professionals responsible for delivering some of the region's most iconic developments. Akhbar AIDar recently spent some time with Craig discussing the Ritz Carlton Abu Dhabi, Grand Canal project.



Craig Bowtell

Project Director
Ritz Carlton Abu Dhabi, Grand Canal

Designed by Otak International, HLG was appointed as main contractor on the project and commenced construction in 2007 to deliver the circa AED1.6 billion (US\$450 million) project.

Spanning 210,000 square metres of beautifully landscaped gardens, the Ritz Carlton Abu Dhabi, Grand Canal boasts 395 hotel guestrooms, 85 villas, 54 apartments and its own private beach overlooking the Grand Canal.

10 grand towers, arranged in a crescent formation and flanked with landscaped grounds, are set to become the perfect backdrop for the region's leisure travelers, wedding ceremonies, conferences and events. By site area, it is the Ritz Carlton brand's largest hotel worldwide.

Starting his construction career in Australia's South East Queensland, Craig has spent 26 years working on a variety of projects with client teams, architects, designers, engineers, sub-contractors and suppliers. "I first joined the industry in the 1980's, and I'm still most driven by the process of being part of a team that's taking the designer's vision and turning it into a reality, whilst overcoming the challenges frequently presented during the construction process," says Craig.

Having spent the past 16 years as an expatriate, Craig has worked on a range of building and industrial projects in South East Asia, including the City of Dreams in Macau, and Craig says that the key to a successful project is teamwork.

"When it comes to delivering a complex project, one team is much more effective than a group of individuals.

"Whether it's resolving the daily obstacles, working with the client/s and supply-chain, or ensuring that safety and sustainability remain a top priority for HLG and its people, you can accomplish much more if your team is focused and working towards a clear set of objectives."

Craig manages a team of 200 core staff, and a site labour team of around 3,000 – with the number stretching to as high as 5,000 during peak construction periods.

In addition to the regular day-to-day office-based tasks, as a daily practice Craig believes it is essential to get onto site to fully understand the issues.

"Within my team, there are people with unique skills and strengths. And by spending one-on-one time with them, I get to know them better as individuals and understand how they can be a more effective member of the team."

One such area that Craig prioritises with his team is safety, and he believes that whilst the construction industry has come a long way in

terms of improving safety standards, until we eliminate all incidents and injuries, we are not there yet. The Ritz Carlton Abu Dhabi, Grand Canal has to date worked in excess of 30 million man hours since starting construction in 2008, with lost time well below HLG and industry averages.

"Every person has a right to go home safe and without injury, and together with my team, we regularly review our on-site practices to make sure that we are taking all necessary steps to eliminate risks."

As the project nears completion, and the client announced an opening date of September 2012 and mobilises a pre-opening site team to prepare the property for opening, the project team is focused on the remaining external hard and soft landscaping, testing and commissioning, final defecting, and inner-pool preparation.

And with various internal areas of the property now ready for client-supplied furniture fixtures & equipment (FF&E) and office supplies and equipment (OS&E), Craig reflects on the progressive sectional handover of the project prior to opening.

"Every project has its challenges, but the final delivery and ultimate success relies on a lot of multi-tasking, balancing and prioritising to ensure we exceed client expectations on time and on budget, while stretching the safety, quality and sustainability targets."

"It's not often that you get the opportunity to be involved in a project of this magnitude, and to see it take shape and be so close to completion is something my team finds very rewarding."



LEIGHTON POSITIONING FOR THE FUTURE





Hamish Tyrwhitt
Chief Executive Officer, Leighton Holdings

At Leighton Holdings' Annual General Meeting in Sydney in May, the Chairman Mr Stephen Johns highlighted the determination of the Board to restore Leighton's performance and to deliver acceptable and sustainable investment returns to shareholders.

"While your Board shares the frustration of shareholders with the profit write-backs on the very complex Airport Link and Victorian Desalination Project, we remain confident in the long-term underlying strength of the business," Mr Johns commented.

"Importantly, we are making significant changes to the way the Leighton Group operates and, in particular, to the way the Group approaches risk, the way we manage very large projects, and the way we reward our executives.

"Under Hamish's leadership we have already delivered significant progress, but that progress has been dwarfed by the issues stemming from Airport Link and the Victorian Desalination Plant. As we near the end of these two projects, the benefits of the Company's strategy will become increasingly apparent.

"These changes are transformational and fundamental to our company's future and the Board is confident that Hamish and his team will deliver them for the benefit of all shareholders," Mr Johns concluded.

In his address to shareholders, Chief Executive Officer Mr Hamish Tyrwhitt said "We are stabilising, reshaping and rebasing our operations, combining the best of the traditional Leighton values, capabilities and strengths with some wide-ranging initiatives.

"We are focused on three key strategies, namely restructuring our operating model, strengthening our balance sheet, and delivering net margin improvement," he stated.

"Leighton Holdings will be more actively involved in risk, early-stage project selection, project review and reporting, and strategic capital allocation. The activities of our Operating Companies will be refocused on their core competencies and markets.

"We will move ahead with our strategy of recycling capital. An example is the sale of the

Thiess Waste business, which is undergoing due diligence by a number of interested parties.

"Importantly, we aim to improve net margins and deliver growth to the bottom line. We will not chase growth at the expense of sustainable returns, particularly where this growth is accompanied by a heightened risk profile. We will also drive cost savings and leverage the Group's buying power to better effect," he said.

"What this means for Leighton is that once we've dealt with the immediate issues and reshaped the way we do business and manage risk, we will have before us a unique set of opportunities.

"This is the Asian Century, with growth forecast for the foreseeable future from economic development and urbanisation. Leighton operates in more than 25 countries within this region. It is in the right place, at the right time and with the right skills to harness the benefits," Mr Tyrwhitt concluded.

"We are focused on three key strategies, namely restructuring our operating model, strengthening our balance sheet, and delivering net margin improvement."

Hamish Tyrwhitt, Chief Executive Officer, Leighton Holdings



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