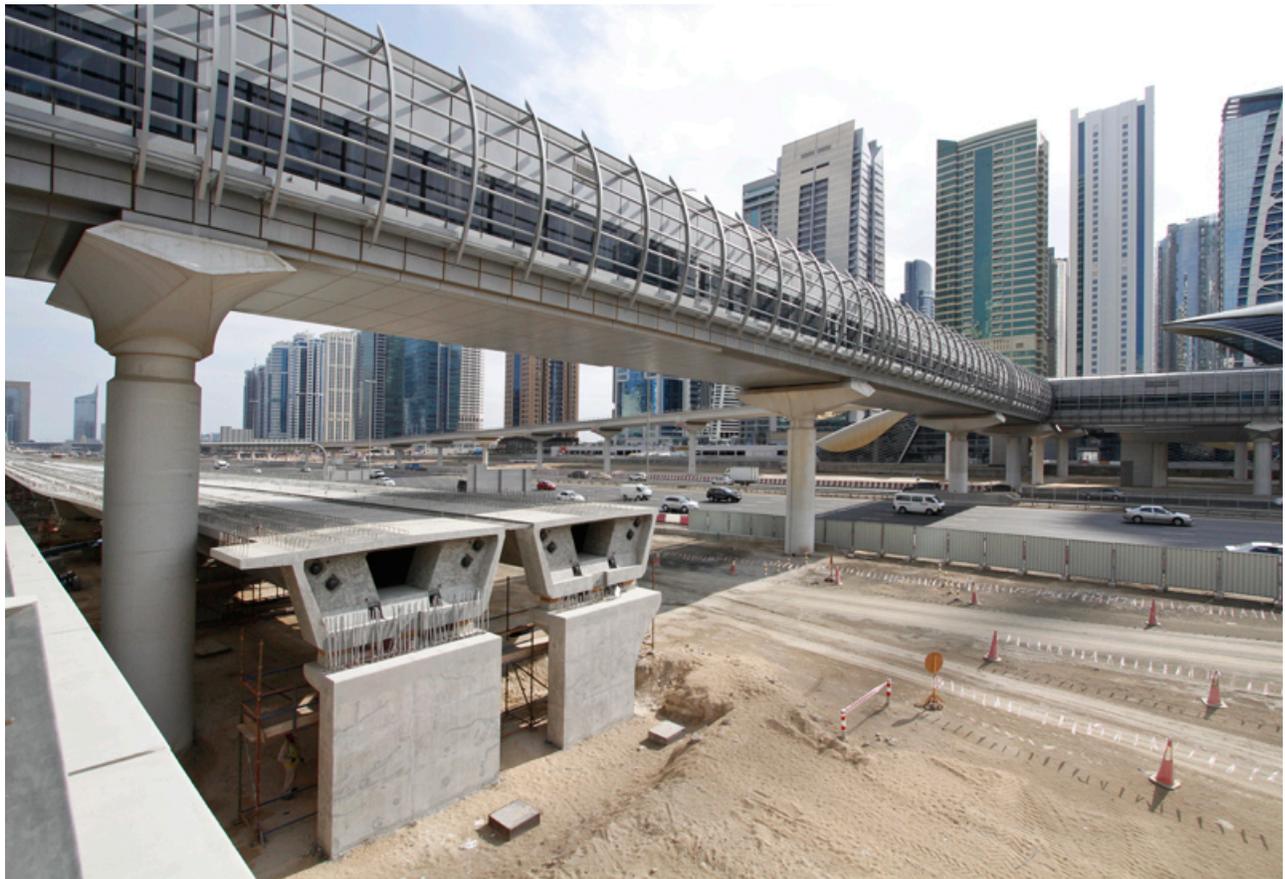


Construction Week

Hill International SVP says Dubai will 'pick up' before Expo 2020

Imad Ghantous tells CW the industry must focus on talent in 2019, ahead of 'magic deadline of 2020'



Hill's Imad Ghantous says Dubai will 'pick up' as momentum gathers ahead of Expo 2020 [representational image].

by [Oscar Rousseau](#)

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Contractors and consultants should brace themselves for a “surge” in new contract wins amid preparations for [Expo 2020 Dubai](#), Hill International’s senior vice president said.

Imad Ghantous, who joined the consultancy behind Palm Jumeirah and King Abdullah Financial District in March 2018, said new work is just around the corner for Dubai construction companies.

“The market is going to pick up as we approach 2020 and, as we [near] the end of 2019, there is going to be a flurry of activity to get ready for Expo 2020 Dubai,” he said.

“In 2019, we need to ensure we have the best people in the right places and that we are looking at the right projects. It’s kind of a prep year for the magic deadline of 2020.”



Imad Ghantous, formerly of Bechtel and Aecom, joined Hill International in March 2018.

Hill International is refocusing its efforts on growth after a challenging 12 months. Its Q3 2018 revenue declined by 17.3% compared with the same period a year ago, and its overall operating loss for the period increased to \$7.7m.

The New York Stock Exchange-listed company has launched a profit improvement plan to deliver value to its shareholders and remain competitive.

With offices in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Bahrain, the business has had a presence in the GCC for more than 30 years. Despite a challenging 2018, the company has said it remains firmly committed to the Middle East market.

As is the case for many construction companies operating in the region, Saudi Arabia is the market Hill International is “targeting very strongly” at present. Neom and the Red Sea Resort are two eagerly awaited projects that Ghantous said Hill has expressed an interest in working on.