

# Gulf Construction

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Jeddah

## Gateway to growth

Jeddah's construction market offers ample opportunities for growth not only because the Red Sea port city is the gateway to the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah but also because of its ambitious redevelopment plan, Dr Adel Jemah, Senior Vice President of Hill International for Saudi Arabia and based in Riyadh, tells Gulf Construction.



The Jeddah Central Project ... a \$20-billion development.

As the gateway to the two Holy Mosques of Makkah and Madinah, Jeddah in the Western Region will always be a vibrant market for the construction industry, with the prime driver being a demand to provide modern and sustainable infrastructure services for the city as well as to a growing number of pilgrims to the region.

Whether it is the Haramain High-Speed Railway – a 450-km-long transportation link connecting Makkah, Jeddah, King Abdullah Economic City and Madinah – or the expansion of the King Abdulaziz International Airport, several projects have been completed recently to facilitate the movement of pilgrims, and numerous others are in the pipeline waiting to be rolled out.

Some of these major projects include a metro system for Jeddah along with a buses and water taxis network and the Obhur Creek bridge, to name a few. Final word is awaited on when construction will start on the Jeddah metro and the Obhur Creek bridge projects, with the expectation that the government could consider options to build them on a public-private partnership (PPP) rather than direct funding from the state coffers.



Dr Jemah ... Hill is in a pole position.

The Obhur Creek link is a cable-suspended arch bridge planned to link the newly developed North Obhur to Jeddah's main transportation link. It is part of the urban masterplan for the expansion of Jeddah – which is currently home to about 4.8 million residents. To be located north-west of the King Abdulaziz International Airport, the bridge is planned to have eight traffic lanes (four in each direction), two sidewalks and two elevated lanes of rail transit to carry the metro line.

### **Current mega projects**

At present, the biggest planned project is Jeddah Central Project entailing a total investment of SR73 billion (\$20 billion).

Jeddah Central Development Company, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF), has begun work to create a global destination in the "heart of Jeddah" (*See page 44*).

Four main landmarks will be set up in the centre of Jeddah: a museum, an opera house, a sports stadium, and an oceanarium. It will also feature 17,000 residential units along with resorts, hotels with more than 3,000 rooms and cafes.

Also planned is the Al Jawhara (Village) Mall project, one of the new and prominent modern developments in Jeddah. It is being built to establish a comprehensive commercial centre with a variety of uses, taking into account the requirements of modern life and the privacy of the Saudi community in addition to the integrated investment benefit from the project.

### **Hill and Jeddah**

Hill International has had a long presence in Jeddah and Makkah and provided its services for several iconic developments in these cities and their hinterland. This includes project management services for five

internationally-branded hotels for the Jabal Omar development in Makkah and industrial facilities in the King Abdullah Economic City. The overall Jabal Omar development involved building 24 internationally branded hotels, apartments, retail and religious facilities over a 230,000-sq-m area adjacent to the Grand Mosque, which saw the development of more than 2 million sq m of built-up area, while the branded hotels included Hilton, Marriott, Hyatt and Conrad.

At present, Hill International is providing its programme management services for 60 schools being built in Jeddah and Makkah under the public-private partnership (PPP) programme.

The port city of Jeddah is one of the old cities with the Red Sea on one side and the two holy cities close by. Besides, it also has a potential for being one of the finest destinations in the region for diving and snorkling which creates opportunities for new related tourist projects to be built.

Given its global and regional expertise in infrastructure, mixed-use developments, Hill is in a pole position for providing its services for the planned mega developments in Jeddah and its hinterland cities.