

Qatar



PART II

The Call from the Desert

The momentum and the influence of this small Arab state on the Persian Gulf are indirectly proportional to its size. During the last decade, it has been a hotspot for the largest construction companies worldwide and an outlet for many Spanish firms in the field

INFRASTRUCTURE

Spain is also building Qatar

It is done by HLG, OHL, Iberdrola, Ecisa, FCC, Sacyr and SENER

AVIATION

Qatar's new brand airport: HIA

Qatar Airways turns to Spain as its gateway to Latin America



SPORTS

Saoud Al Thani Secretary-General of the Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC)

«We've kept sport on agenda for over forty years now»

ECONOMY

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A Country Under Construction

Qatar is immersed in a never-before-seen construction work maelstrom and one can already see the essence of the country it wants to be by 2030

The scene took place in the lobby of a Qatari minister's office in February. An executive from the consulting firm McKinsey had just arrived from Belgium. From the office one was able to hear a warm welcome, «Mister Luis! Please come in.» The tone was one of familiarity. Mister Luis has been traveling to Qatar for fifteen years now. Almost as many years as have been invested so far to transform it into a modern state under Qatar National Vision (QNV) 2030, a roadmap of only forty pages summarizing the strategy for becoming an advanced nation by that year. Everything in Qatar is based on this document. Its preface is signed by the Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, who celebrates two anniversaries this month: his 34th birthday and his first full year as head of state after the abdication of his father, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. In these past twelve months, the continuity of the economic strategy has prevailed; including the status quo of international consultants like Mister Luis, who merge with the Qatari institutions, advise its rulers and appear in their offices, even if it means flying from overseas with 24-hour prior notice. When one travels for the first time to the Arab Peninsula, and in particular to Qatar, one does so with a certain amount of romanticism. One looks for an exotic country –and finds it–, but right away sees that its heartbeats sound like machines digging ditches and drilling tunnels 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and that its government is structured with a strategy and vision more typical of a multinational than that of a developing country.

Nowadays Doha's heartbeats sound like machines digging ditches and drilling tunnels 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Word has it that the Father Emir spent several years together with his inner circle designing the basis of a modern state that today has only 250,000 Qatari citizens from the 2.10 million inhabitants recorded by the last population census, which also records annual double digit growth. – About 1,500 Spaniards are officially recorded in the country's population-. In 1995, Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, a graduate of the Sandhurst British Royal Military Academy, and whom many define as a visionary, led a bloodless coup d'état, seizing the position held by his own father. Everything remained within the family. The Al Thani tribe, to which 10% of Qatari citizens belong to, had ruled Qatar long before gaining independence, abandoning the status of British protectorate in 1971. As for the rest of the population, 80% is of Bedouin origin and 10% are traders. This structure



Souq Waqif, the most popular souk in Doha, a special favorite of the Qataris

continues nowadays, though the circumstances are different.

The most competitive country in the Gulf

Qatar boasts the highest per capita income in the world; it is the thirteenth most competitive country according to the Global Competitiveness Report led by Switzerland –where Spain is number 35 on the list– and it is ahead of other member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a trade and political alliance integrated by six Arab nations bordering the Persian Gulf, except for Iraq: Oman, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. After years of double-digit rise, GDP growth is now stabilized at around 6%. This is partly due to a self-imposed moratorium on the production of hydrocarbons –which generate 54% of the US\$ 155 billion GDP estimated for Qatar this year by the IMF– for the expansion of other sectors; particularly construction, transportation, communications and finance. According to QNB, the biggest bank in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) the government investment predicted between 2014 and 2018 is US\$ 176 billion (€130 billion); the infrastructure and transportation sectors will be key in the run-up to the controversial 2022 FIFA World Cup.

The new silk road

The current maelstrom of construction is without precedent in Qatar. In May a brand new airport –which required a

state investment of €11 billion was opened to the public. It will have a capacity for 50 million passengers once it is finished, and the goal, shared with neighboring UAE, is to shift the center of gravity of international aviation into the Gulf. Some are already calling it the new Silk Road. To this we must add up all the pending projects to be awarded –managed from Ashghal (the Public Works Authority of Qatar), Qatar Rail and the New Port Steering Committee–, which exceed €50 billion. The number will continue to increase if one takes into account the stadiums expected to be awarded from 2015 through the Supreme Committee of Delivery & Legacy, the supervisory body for all issues related to the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Simultaneously, construction work is underway for Lusail City, a sustainable and futuristic metropolis that will be home to 200,000 people. It is the largest single development to be undertaken

Lusail City is a sustainable and futuristic metropolis that will be home to 200,000 people

by the State of Qatar; a €35 billion investment, lying north of Doha on land reclaimed from the sea. Behind its scenes is Lusail City Real Estate Development (LCRED), a company owned by Qatari Diar, the property development fund and investment arm established in 2005 and

controlled by Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), the country's sovereign wealth fund. Qatari Diar Vinci Company (QDVC), a joint venture between Qatari Diar and one of the largest construction companies in the world, the French Vinci is in charge of this choreographed creation.

Additionally, €4.8 billion are being invested to regenerate Msheireb –which in Arab means «a place to drink water»–, the historic downtown of the capital, through Qatar Foundation Research and Development. This is the same environment where the construction of the flagship station of the Doha metro is currently underway, with the participation of Spanish OHL.

Qatar knows what is at stake

As Qatar has turned into a dense and titanic factory it has exposed the less privileged working conditions of some of the thousands of blue color laborers from Southeast Asia. Qatar's success is also due to their contribution and the ease with which they have been hired in crucial moments, as well as their availability in the next future. The authorities are well aware of this and have undertaken to reinforce existing control systems – which are already clearly specified in all the terms and conditions signed by construction companies when they're awarded projects– so that there is strict compliance with the safety standards among others which protect these workers. Nobody knows better than Qatar what is at stake. It deserves a vote of confidence.

DR. MOHAMMED BIN SALEH AL-SADA, MINISTER OF ENERGY AND INDUSTRY OF QATAR AND CHAIRMAN & MANAGING DIRECTOR OF QATAR PETROLEUM

«The agreement with Iberdrola will enable Qatar to diversify its energy sources»

It is easy to understand why Qatar Petroleum (QP) is one of the targets of the large engineering and construction firms on a global scale. Its credentials prove it. Qatar announced in May a plan to invest €8 billion in the redevelopment of offshore oilfield Bul Hanine. Individually, it is one of the largest projects undertaken to date; it is part of a massive drilling campaign of about 150 new wells by 2028, in order to increase crude oil reserves in the reservoir and in Dukhan, the city where Qatar first discovered oil in 1939. Qatar has the thirteenth largest oil reserve in the world. According to Dr. Mohammed bin Saleh Al-Sada, Minister of Energy and Industry of Qatar and Chairman & Managing Director of QP, it is all done with a specific purpose: «Qatar National Vision 2030 acknowledges that sound management of hydrocarbon sources will continue to ensure improvements in the living standards.»

QP is the crown jewel of Qatar. It manages its entire gas and oil industry, and supplies the world each year with

77 billion tons of LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas), which equals revenues of 54% of Qatar's GDP; i. e. €83.7 billion.» Since we started the production of LNG sixteen years ago, Qatar has become a global giant», says the minister. It is the largest exporter in the world and has the third largest reserves on earth. It is also

Qatar Petroleum announced in May a plan to invest €8 billion in the redevelopment of offshore oilfield Bul Hanine

the third supplier of Spain and responsible for the trade deficit of €1.08 billion it currently holds with the Arab country. QP is the owner of some of the largest Qatari companies, such as RasGas, Qatar Petroleum Company (QAPCO) and Qatargas. The latter signed an agreement in 2004 with Spanish Gas Natural Fenosa to import annually 2 billion cubic me-



Dr. Mohammed bin Saleh Al-Sada

ters of LNG until 2024. «We're capitalizing on hydrocarbon revenues and strong economic growth by reinvesting it in our economy, in order to help other sectors expand», conveys Al-Sada.

A strategic agreement with Iberdrola

QP also manages the industrial cities of Mesaieed and Ras Laffan. Mesaieed, south of Doha, is home to the 200 megawatt combined cycle gas power plant

«Qatar National Vision 2030 acknowledges that sound management of hydrocarbon sources will continue to ensure improvements in the living standards»

built by Iberdrola for Kahramaa (The Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation), to whom it is bound by an agreement signed in 2011 and equity interest by Qatar Investment Authority (QIA). According to the minister, «we believe that the strategic agreement with Iberdrola is very important; it will allow Qatar to diversify its energy sources.» Construction work is underway from Mesaieed for the New Orbital, a two-lane 200 km highway that will connect Mesaieed with the new port of Ras Laffan, built by QP and located 80 km north of Doha. A stretch of 56 km of this highway was awarded in March 2014 to HLG, the subsidiary of Spanish Grupo ACS in the Middle East.

Ras Laffan is one of the biggest ports in the world as far as energy exports go. A visit to the port is all it takes to understand the level of sophistication achieved by Qatar and it is designed as «the export facility» for the gas –and other by-products– that arrives at the port from North Field, the largest single reserve of natural gas in the world, located 70 km from the port, beneath the sea in the Persian Gulf.

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BILATERAL RELATIONS

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ABDULRAZZAK AL-ABDULGHANI, AMBASSADOR OF QATAR IN SPAIN

«Our mainstay is transparency and competition»

Abdulrazzak Al-Abdulghani was appointed Ambassador of the State of Qatar in September 2013 and admits he feels honored to have been chosen by «His Highness» Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani for this post. He has a long career and is considered a heavyweight Qatari diplomat. These past years Mr. Al-Abdulghani, who has an enthusiastic and lively disposition, served as ambassador to Turkey, where he contributed to sustained growth in bilateral relations. So his move to Madrid has been interpreted as a strong backing to work in tandem with

The appointment of the new Ambassador of Qatar to Spain, Abdulrazzak Albduljalil Al-Abdulghani, has been seen as a strong recognition to the Spanish-Qatari tandem



Abdulrazzak Abduljalil A.N. Al-Abdulghani

Spain. «I'm here to enhance and promote the economic, cultural and sports relations; it is an effort that must go in both directions: from Qatar to Spain and vice versa», he says.

The revival of bilateral agreements is one of his goals; for example, the creation of the Qatari-Spanish Entrepreneur Council. Furthermore, Al-Abdulghani is particularly keen in proposing a formula that Qatar is already using in other markets, namely the partnership of two countries to invest in third ones. He already did it in Turkey, which is currently building a highway in Bulgaria in alliance with Qatar.

Sport as a priority

The ambassador acknowledges that the Spanish market's presence and share in Qatar is still limited; especially in regard to the number of awarded infrastructure

projects. He is confident, however, that the current construction work, such as those of the metro and highways, in which Spanish companies participate, will increase this in the future. Additionally, he stresses that «the rumor that there are economic favors based on the good relations between two countries is false, since the

mainstay of the Qatari administration is primarily transparency and competition.»

Additionally, the Ambassador of the State of Qatar claims sports are among his top focus areas as it is a priority in the social development of Qatar. «Combined efforts already exist between the two countries and we would like to take advantage of this situation and the Spanish experience in sports matters», he says, anticipating that he will be the host at the official visit of top representatives of the Qatar Olympic Committee to Spain. «The Spaniards know much of Qatar through sports and the preparations for the World Cup.»

CARMEN DE LA PEÑA CORCUERA, AMBASSADOR OF SPAIN IN QATAR

«Spanish companies have taken the market by storm in Qatar»

The Embassy of Spain in Qatar celebrates its first decade. At its helm is Carmen de la Peña Corcuera, a diplomat who arrived three years ago to Doha and admits that the more one delves into the gas and oil sectors, the more fascinating it seems. In 2004 there were barely any Spanish companies in Qatar and today there are over



Carmen de la Peña Corcuera

fifty, «including most of the ones listed on the IBEX», says the ambassador. There is also a Spanish Business Council (SBC). «It means that Spanish companies have taken this market by storm, where they enjoy a reputation for extensive experience and flexibility regarding project implemen-

«Qatar is an empowering country where you learn of its dynamism rooted in the Qatar National Vision (QNV) 2030»

The Ambassador of Spain to Qatar believes that as the Spanish companies achieve big contracts, the SMEs bunching effect will occur

tation.» The embassy is working on the promotion of Qatari technical missions to Spain in key sectors for the development of Qatar and in which Spain maintains its leadership, such as water, renewable energies and transportation.

De la Peña believes that as the Spanish companies achieve big contracts, the SMEs bunching effect will occur. She also believes that its presence is resulting in greater awareness of the Spain brand. «This is verified in areas such as architecture, engineering, fashion, sports, design ... Spain is executing iconic projects such as the Sidra Medical and Research Center and the Doha Metro major stations, being built by OHL, or the Mesaieed combined cycle plant by Iberdrola.» Furthermore, the ambassador highlights the knowledge that the Qataris have of Spain «through our soccer teams and athletes» and how it has influenced the recruitment of Spanish professionals in Qatar as trainers, doctors and managers. «They transfer their knowledge and experience to contribute to the development of sports in Qatar.»

Carmen de la Peña describes this Gulf state as «an empowering country where you learn of its dynamism rooted in the Qatar National Vision (QNV) 2030, its facilitator role on the global scene and how it leads the way on many issues with soft diplomacy, among which I would include sectors such as education, research, innovation, culture and interfaith dialogue.»

DR. HAMAD BIN ABDULAZIZ AL-KUWARI, MINISTER OF CULTURE, ARTS AND HERITAGE

«It takes two to tango»

Qatar seeks to preserve its roots and maintain its identity within a modern state

In a country where the expat population is 85%, anyone might feel threatened; Qatar sees it differently. «The world has changed. We need each other; expats are looking for their opportunity and that is something positive for the common interest, so we see foreigners as a way to enrich and strengthen the interaction between cultures», says Dr. Hamad Al-Kuwari, Minister of Culture, Arts and Heritage of Qatar, one of the few who retained his position as cabinet minister after the shift of power in 2013.

Three years ago, Qatar launched a program that dedicates twelve months of bilateral cultural activities and exchange to a specific country. It began with Japan, one of its major trading partners. Qatar UK

2013 Year of Culture followed. The success was remarkable, attracting almost fifty sponsors for this year-long experience. So much so that the list of countries is already set until 2022, date of the FIFA World Cup. This year will be dedicated to Brazil. No sign of Spain. «Let me give some positive criticism for Spain, which has some of the greatest museums in the world and some of the greatest artists and does not do enough to make all this known and promote its culture. A path always has two sides; not everything can be done from the same side and we invite our Spanish friends to reach halfway and work with us to improve cultural relations with the Arab world in general and Qatar in particular. Spain is very important to us, but it

takes two to tango. Whenever culture is involved, Spain is always on the list. We are open to fresh ideas and would like to discuss the matter with the Minister of Education, Culture and Sports.»

Dr. Al-Kuwari also notes that economy and culture go together in Qatar. «If one does not have cultural relations with Qatar, one does not understand the country and therefore the political and economic objectives are not met», he says while pointing to pictures in his office, where he poses with leaders from around the world, including the Mayor of London. «When he first came to Doha it was for business; later on he realized that culture could help him in his task and he came to see me. Almost everyone does», says the minister.



Dr. Hamad Bin Abdulaziz Al-Kuwari

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INFRASTRUCTURE

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A Pick-axe in Qatar

Since arriving in Qatar, Spanish companies have signed €8.95 billion in infrastructure contracts; 44% between 2012 and June 2014. The Qatari administration is their main customer, though not the only one

A British banker recalls the story of the Spanish builder who in 2007 walked into his office in Doha without speaking a word of English. He wanted to show the importance of this market for the company and gain the trust of local banks. «We communicated in *Portuñol*», he says. He's talking about Manuel Peláez Castillo, the recently deceased founder of Ecisa, a medium-sized company in Alicante (Spain), successfully operating among the big international construction companies. It is the exception among the group of Spanish construction companies present –with works of a certain size– in the Qatari market: ACS, through its subsidiary HLG, OHL, FCC and Sacyr. There's also SENER, which oversees the works of QDVC (the joint venture between Qatari Diar and French corporation Vinci), Ferrovial Agroman, still without work underway, and Iberdrola, the first one to arrive in 2004 and which has built one of the largest combined cycle gas plants in the world.

According to the Qatari authorities, the investment for the next seven years

«The competition is fierce and they look like gladiators in the Roman Coliseum», an Englishman said in March

will be US\$ 350 billion –€256 billion–, of which €102 billion will go to transportation infrastructure and €15 billion will go to hotels. Spaniards want part of the pie. Also its foreign rivals who came before. Just to name a few, there are European giants such as Vinci, Strabag, Bouygues, Skanska, PORR or Bilfinger Berger, American companies like Fluor, Asian firms –Hyundai and Samsung among them– and other well-positioned regional companies such as UAE corporation Arabtec and Saudi Binladin. Qatar is an outlet in the face of industry blockage in Europe. «The competition is fierce and they look like gladiators in the Roman Coliseum», an Englishman said in March, during MEED Projects, the industry conferences organized annually in Doha.

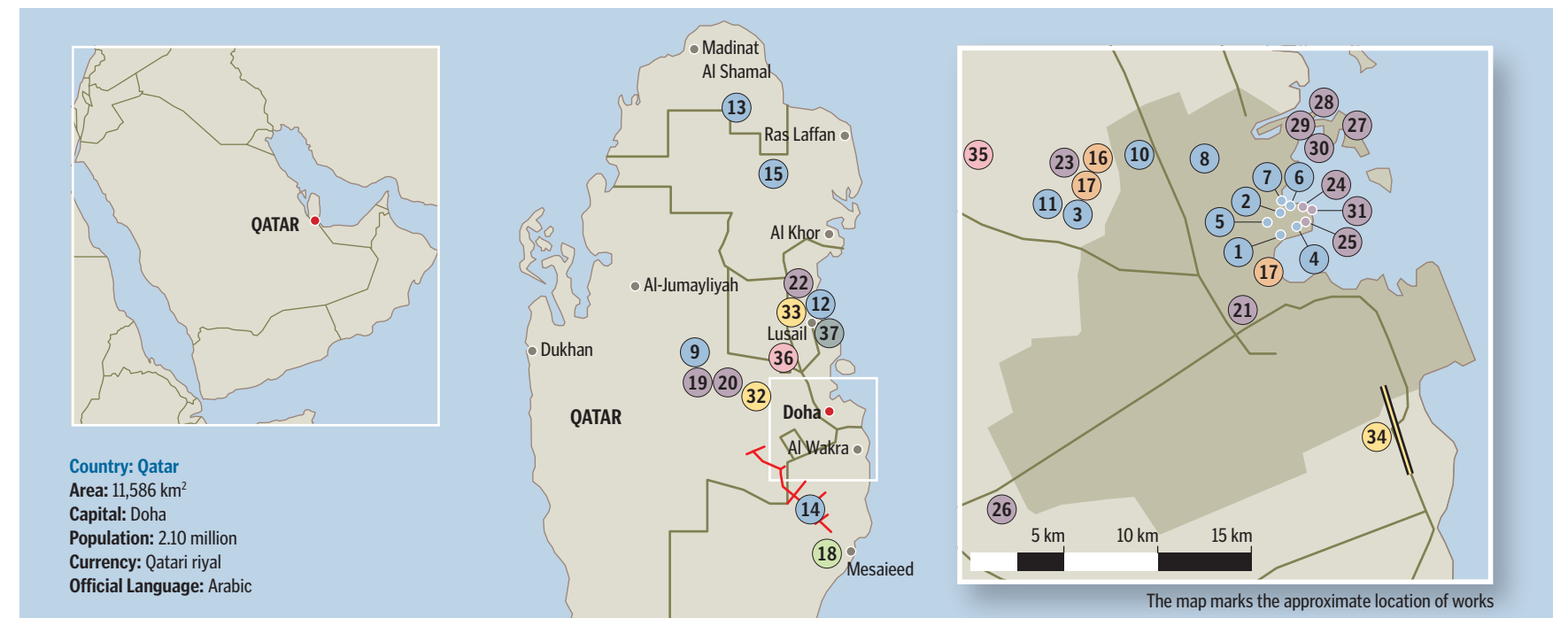
200,000 new vehicles each year

Efficient transportation is badly needed in Qatar. Currently, Qatar Rail has awarded the Doha metro for which OHL will build the two most representative stations and FCC will build a section of one of its

CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS AWARDED TO SPANISH COMPANIES

	Start	HLG (ACS Group)	Client	Mill. €	End
1	N/D	Dubai Doha Tower	Sama Dubai (formerly Dubai Properties)	282	N/A
2	2005	Doha City Center - (5 hotels: three of them pending delivery)	Al Faisal Holding	238	2014
3	2006	Al Shaqab Equestrian Academy	Qatar Foundation	585	2013
4	2007	Al Dareen Tower	Al Jazi Real Estate	34	2012
5	2008	Al Faisal Tower	Qatar Islamic Bank	50	2012
6	2008	Arwa Tower	Al Jazi Real Estate	35	2014
7	2009	Traders Doha - Hotel and apartments	Al Jazi Real Estate	60	2013
8	2009	Reservoirs and pumping stations at Duhail and Umm Qarn	Kahramaa	147	2013
9	2010	New Shahaniya reservoirs and Shahaniya and Dukkan RPS's upgrade	Kahramaa	13	2012
10	2011	North Gate Mall and office buildings	North Gate WLL	212	2015
11	2012	People Mover System in Education City	Qatar Foundation	91	2015
12	2012	Reservoirs at Al Duhail and Umm Qarn	Kahramaa	64	2014
13	2012	Reservoirs and pumping stations at Al Kaaban	Kahramaa	19	2014
14	2014	New Orbital Highway & truck route Al Mesaieed interchange to Salwa Road (*)	Ashghal	1,230	2017
15	2014	128 km of large diameter water pipelines and fibre optic ducts in suburban Doha (**)	Kahramaa	234	2016
		(*) In alliance with Al Jaber Engineering (***) Preawarded		Total	3,294
	Start	OHL	Client	Mill. €	End
16	2008	Sidra Medical and Research Center (*)	Qatar Foundation	2,000	2014
17	2013	Major stations in Education City and Msherieb (**)	Qatar Rail	1,100	2019
		(*) In alliance with Contrack (***) In consortium with Samsung and Qatar Building Company		Total	3,100
	Start	IBERDROLA	Client	Mill. €	End
18	2009	2000 MW combined cycle gas power plant in Mesaieed	Mesaieed Power Co.	1,189	
				Total	1,189
	Start	ECISA HARINSA (*)	Client	Mill. €	End
19	2008	ABM Military College	PEO	37	2010
20	2008	Tracks and military training camp for ABM Military College	PEO	10	2009
21	2008	Bilal Plaza	Sheikh Nasser bin Abdullah al Thani	6	2010
22	2011	MV2 Data base	Qatar Foundation	67	2014
23	2011	MV3 Data base	Qatar Foundation	23	2013
24	2011	Bin Samikh Tower	Doha Islamic Bank and Tamiyat Real Estate	57	2014
25	2013	Waldorf Astoria Hotel	Saad Mohammed Fahad Buzwair	85	2016
26	2013	Workers camp and logistic center - vehicle maintenance	Sheikh Nasser bin Abdullah al Thani	40	2015
27	2013	Completion of three towers in Viva Bahriya (La Perla)	The Land Company	103	2016
28	2014	Completion of Tower 16 in Porto Arabia (La Perla)	The Land Company	16	2015
29	2014	Completion of Tower 10 in Porto Arabia (La Perla)	The Land Company	8	2015
30	2014	Completion of Tower 2 in Porto Arabia (La Perla)	The Land Company	8	2015
31	2014	JW Marriott Hotel	Daphne Hotels Company	200	2017
		(*) Qatari sponsor: Khaled Sultan Al Marzouqi		TOTAL	660
	Start	FCC	Client	Mill. €	End
32	2012	13 km of streets in Barzan Military Camp, Al Wajba (*)	PEO	40	2014
33	2013	Two pedestrian bridges in Lusail City (*)	LREDC	28	2015
34	2014	A section of Doha Metro - Red Line (**)	Qatar Rail	506	2019
		(*) In alliance with Petroserv (***) In consortium with Archidoron, Yüksel and Petroserv		Total	574
	Start	SACYR	Client	Mill. €	End
35	2013	22,7 km of local roads and streets (Bani Hajer), in Al Rayyan (*)	Ashghal	70	2014
36	2014	20 km of local roads and infrastructure in Al Khessa, Al Dayeen (*)	Ashghal	65	2015
		(*) In alliance with Combined Group Company		Total	135
	Start	SENER	Client	Mill. €	End
37	2010	Independent checker and site supervision in the LRT, Lusail City (*)	QDVC	374(*)	2016
		(*) Total value of current works awarded to QDVC. Not added to the grand total		Total	374
				GRAND TOTAL	8,952

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF THE WORKS OF SPANISH COMPANIES IN QATAR



lines. The capital –where most of the 2.10 million inhabitants live suffers from time-consuming daily traffic jams that hinder productivity. According to Abdulla Abdulaziz Al Subaie, Chairman of the Executive Committee of Qatar Rail «there are 200,000 new vehicles coming on board annually». But until the metro is not completed –and even after it is concluded– it will be difficult to do without a vehicle in a country where filling the gas tank only costs €10. In turn, another one of the major public clients, Ashghal, the Public Works Authority of Qatar, is upgrading the entire network of local roads and highways and has over thirty outstanding bundles to be assigned. One of the most significant ones awarded this year has been the New Orbital highway, where HLG took a stretch of 56 km for €1.23 billion.

The Qatari authorities are watchful of the progress of any construction work underway. «All metro lines will have to be finished and ready for the opening by the end of 2019», says Al Subaie. The network has an overall length of 300 km and contracts have been awarded in bundles consisting of two foreign companies and at least one local firm. The structure was mandatory in order to allow integration of local knowledge and support to the economy of the country enhancing their capabilities and thus the role of the Qatari private sector.

Not everything is money

When asked why Spain hasn't got more contracts, Mr. Al Subaie replies that «the international interest was huge. First we had the technical evaluation, then the commercial one. Price is always an issue. Spain is respected worldwide for its technology in railways, but did not arrive first. It was probably too busy in its own market and only looked beyond its borders when the crisis went off. When you come for the first time you need a learning period and very competitive prices. Is all about money? «No. The most important factor is your commitment. We do not like delays. There are infrastructure companies with their own strategy, which is not ours. I would ask them: are you only here for 'the contract' and intend to leave



Abdulaziz Al Subaie, Qatar Rail

Manuel Teruel, Chairman of the Higher Council of the Chambers of Commerce

«Recognition of Spanish diplomas and degrees is a problem in Qatar. The matter has been brought before the Qatari authorities and we're working on it. Some Spanish companies are the top of the rankings but have technicians who cannot sign their own projects in Qatar. In the past we only exported goods and services, never professionals, but now we have a surplus of 40,000 architects. It happens in engineering, medicine... Qatar has its needs. Professional services are exportable and from the Chambers of Commerce programs are executed together with the professional associations in order to channel them.»

Luciano González López-Salazar, Economic Delegate, Economic and Commercial Attaché, Embassy of Spain in Qatar

«Qataris are a well-traveled people. Bilateral relations in recent times are handled through official visits. The decision to make the visit or not may put a country in a better position in the grid within its calendar and in their perspective. They appreciate the visits from the CEOs of large companies; they seek involvement. At a high level, they have a globalized world view and the process for awarding major international contracts is very competitive right now.»

Leon Fernando del Canto, Lawyer and Barrister in Qatar

«There are opportunities for Spanish companies to benefit from a good tax legal strategy, taking into account the entry into force last April of the double taxation treaty between Spain and Qatar.»

Pedro Amengual, Managing Director of Seattle

«The average maturity period of a company in Qatar is around one to two years. We've been consultants for over fifteen years now in this country and our message to companies that wish to operate in a serious way would be that in order to succeed they must be consistent and be willing to invest an average of €150,000 to €200,000 per year. This includes sending a Business Development Manager to start commercial operations.»

Juan Manuel Cadenas, Regional Director of FCC in the Middle East and President of the Spanish Business Council (SBC)

FCC came to Qatar in 2010 and has taken four years to get a major contract: a metro line worth €506 million. «We have gone past the adaptation stage and we are currently in the results stage. My expectations are good. I think in the next two years we can get a hold of a couple of works worth around €100 million each –in local Ashghal roads, where we are short-listed– and get a soccer stadium. That is one of our future goals. The Qataris look affectionately upon the Spanish companies. They value our ability to improvise and change behaviors to reach quick fixes but do not feel the admiration they have for the British and the Americans. It may be that in Spain there is an idyllic vision of this market, but it is hard to make a mark and to establish firmly.»

José Luis Oliván, Director General of Qatar Sacyr

Sacyr landed in Qatar in 2011 and only attends public tenders. It has two projects awarded for a total value of €126 million. For

«I would ask them: are you only here for 'the contract' and intend to leave in three year's time or are you coming to build a business here and stay with us for the next twenty years?»

in three year's time or are you coming to build a business here and stay with us for the next twenty years? We are looking for companies that understand our project as a nation. Spaniards have been among us for a small amount of time. We will need time to see how they fare. In a project such as the metro with bundles released almost at the same time it will be easy to compare and that adds pressure, so it will bring out the best in them.»

its size, they are modest contracts, but their success rate is 50%. It is also short-listed in four additional tenders. Its goal is to get an infrastructure project of around €500 million although «currently getting projects amounting to €200 or €100 million is not easy anywhere in the world. Qatar is a small country, but the competition of international construction companies is fierce, as well as competition between prices. We never submit abnormally low bids to win a contract but I know about companies that do it. There should be more information in Spain about how this market works, so that, prior to arrival, stakeholders may analyze well if their business models are exportable or not.»

Gabriel Méndez, Managing Director of Ferrovial Agroman in the Middle East

After four years in Qatar, the country is still resisting this division of Ferrovial that is having a good performance in neighboring markets, where it has €380 million in execution. Their strategy has been to go alone without a local partner –shared option with a minority of international companies– and concentrate on three major customers: QDVC, Ashghal and Qatar Rail. After being well-positioned in all tenders, the managing director is confident that the rest of 2014 will bring opportunities for new companies with available resources as it is their case. «We are interested in the long-distance railway, Doha Expressway –highways– and Doha Sharq Crossing, a set of three interconnected bridges –designed by Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava– with 8 km of underground tunnels to link three areas of Doha. Another division of the group, Ferrosar, has three maintenance contracts at the airport under a joint venture with Qatar Airways.»

INFRASTRUCTURE

The challenge of fast-track construction

OHL is close to finishing Sidra Medical and Research Center while it builds the two most iconic stations of the Doha metro

It all happened in an afternoon last March. The boardroom of the OHL headquarters in Qatar displayed unmistakable signs of what had taken place. A chalkboard on the wall showed the map of Qatar with the layout of the long-distance railway line still to be awarded by the Qatari authorities. Another one on a stand described several construction companies divided into consortiums with comments like 'they'll want to be in command' or 'we would lead the way'. These were the conjectures of the OHL managers designing their strategy as a group interested in building the 'iron road' of this tiny country in the Arabian Peninsula. After all, the Spanish company chaired by Juan-Miguel Villar Mir is one of the international leaders in the construction of railway infrastructure.

A few days before, Qatar Rail announced the first briefings prior to the tender for the construction of the long-distance railroad that will run parallel to the Persian Gulf and will connect Oman, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

In the jargon of the trade, they are referred to as 'industry awareness'. In total, 146 km of roads will extend into the Qatar Peninsula. The expectations were so high that the briefings had to be repeated in movie-style theaters. More than 300 companies –Spanish, Australian, American, Japanese, Korean, Brazilian and Turkish among them – were invited to the event. Qatar is in vogue these days. The crisis in overseas markets, the advertising conducted on international scale and the 2022 FIFA World Cup has created a powerful magnetic effect.

Qatar's charm

In Saudi Arabia, the neighboring country, the railway is also being tendered. The country has 1000 km of roads and competition is much less intense. In addition, there are works planned for several thousand kilometers more. Why being



Andreas Weisser, responsible for OHL Construcción in the Gulf

so small Qatar attracts many players and its neighbor does not? Andreas Weisser, a Brazilian of German origin responsible for OHL Construcción in the Gulf thinks that «while the country's population, resources, contracts and the potential is much higher in Saudi Arabia, contractual conditions are difficult, logistics are difficult and hiring expats willing to stay for a long period is just as difficult.» In Saudi Arabia, OHL participates in one of the most complex technical projects in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC): the high-speed railway between the cities of Mecca and Medina. It belongs to its «high-quality portfolio»: the

group's list of big contracts. It was awarded in October 2011 and generates revenues of €586 million. The urban viaduct at Jamal Abdul Nasser Avenue in Kuwait also forms part of that portfolio, in



Sidra Medical and Research Center

of three indoor gardens, different from each other, climate-controlled and visible from the rooms. They are healing gardens and have therapeutic uses. In a desert climate like Doha's, green spaces become more relevant because they are scarce, although well cared of. «For practical purposes the only possibility was to build them inside to avoid the extreme summer heat and a dusty atmosphere which is detrimental to the patient», says one of the members of OHL's staff involved in the works. The vegetation that grows there come from different parts of the world and was taken care of for nine months in the Netherlands. Upon reaching the desert, OHL had 72 hours to make the transplant; the maximum time to do it in top conditions. Sidra has over 700 suppliers from 80 countries, providing all kinds of materials and cutting-edge technology; including Spanish companies like Moinsa, which furnishes wood lining, and Flores Valles, which sells lab equipment.

Sidra has over 700 suppliers from 80 countries, with all kinds of materials and cutting-edge technology; including Spanish companies like Moinsa and Flores Valles

vide the hospital, splitting it up into three vertical enclosures with different entrances and areas: pediatrics, women and men. In Qatar, different genders have separate hospital zones. It only has 400 rooms –each one individual– complete with their own bathroom. The feeling is like that of being in a hotel.

Dutch-style transplant

On the fifth floor, a slab of concrete five-feet thick supports the weight

a country where Weisser sees excellent business opportunities.

Compared with Mecca-Medina, the 146-km railway network across Qatar appear modest, but OHL's strategy is to consolidate its position in markets already served. It has been six years in Qatar and it is one of the leading Spanish construction companies with total combined contract portfolio value of €3.1 billion derived from Sidra Medical and Research Center and the two Doha metro major stations, Msherieb and Education City. These last two were awarded in May 2013 for delivery in 2018 and are shared with Samsung, which leads the project, and local corporation Qatar Building Company. The policy of Qatar Rail, its client, demanded the presence of a Qatari within the core of the bidding consortiums.

State-of-the-art technology at its core

Before the metro stations, OHL was awarded the contract for the construction of Sidra Medical and Research Center. It was five years ago and it will be delivered in late 2014. The hospital is an ultramodern, all-digital academic center and its construction has been complex. The process followed has been the simultaneous execution of design and construction (fast track). According to Weisser, «that has been the most difficult part. In principle, a hospital is designed, tendered and awarded, but here it has been designed while being constructed.» It began as a maternal child hospital and has ended up as a medical center with three functions: the application of the most advanced medical care, biomedical research and the education and training of healthcare professionals. «As end-client, Qatar Foundation has incorporated the latest developments and technologies that were appearing on

OHL has managed peaks of 13,000 people at work. Sidra is made up of five buildings; four of them already delivered and the last one nearing completion

the market, which has made the whole process very dynamic, but to apply those changes in an area of 320,000 square meters has been very complicated. Quick decisions are necessary to meet the original deadlines», says Andreas Weisser. On the positive side, «the client has seen and valued that OHL is committed to investing, risking, and taking responsibility to deliver and perform.» The company has managed peaks of 13,000 people at work. «Managing to coordinate the work of everyone in a state-of-the-art paperless hospital with high luxury quality and finishes is a real challenge», says Weisser. By way of comparison, the works of the two Doha metro stations have about 2,000 people, of which 150 are Spaniards.

With the experience gained over the last years, is there anything important to know about the region? «The landing of large Spanish companies in Qatar –we were the second ones after Iberdrola– triggered the entrance of other players. It is necessary to have courage and take risks. OHL is a pioneer company in countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. To assess risk properly is at the core of our strategy. Also to look carefully at the evolution of some countries such as Iraq and Iran, and keep an eye on them. Companies see these markets with fear, but you pay a high fee for late arrival.»

Read the full interviews on www.mymmerchan.com

FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

A constructive metaphor in a multicultural country

«We strive daily to build bridges of communication and open up to other cultures without foregoing the priority of strengthening our national identity, presenting it to the world.»
Dr. Khaled bin Ibrahim Al-Sulaiti, Director General of KATARA CULTURAL VILLAGE

An advise for Spanish companies

«You always have to think outside the box, think of something that could give value to the Qataris. They do not just want to sell gas, they want to share profits. Qatar has successfully completed many projects; without going any further, the world's largest fertilizer plant. How was this done? They had exceptionally good joint partners who had equity stake in the projects undertaken and they were given a fairly free hand to go about the business. For example, ExxonMobil and Total have created solid ties with Qatar Petroleum and built mega projects with no disturbance. Yet it is still not the time for small and medium-sized enterprises, but for large enterprises with Government backing.»
Pavan Singh, Managing Director of THE INTECH GROUP (NBK Group)

A view on Spain

«Spain is known for its talent and when there are economic problems one should reflect on how to use it. Qatar is a land of opportunities towards where it may be channeled successfully.»
Elias R. Chedid, Chief Operating Officer of SEIB

A market prediction

«At the moment, we don't need capital, although capital is the fuel that drives banks and if this sustained growth continues we will need it.»
Steve Troop, Adviser to the Chairman of BARWA BANK



International support for the Qatari economy

«The latest IMF report on Qatar is the best ever published on a country by the Fund. It is a model economy. They all come to the same conclusion. Qatar has strong economic indicators. It deserves a Triple A rating. It is an opinion shared by many.»
Dr. Seetharaman, CEO of DOHA BANK

Sidra, a hospital for the senses and research

Scientists are already conducting biomedical research at Sidra targeting diabetes and cardiovascular disease

Very soon some patients in Qatar will wake up, open their eyes and have the feeling of lying under a tree with their eyes set on the sky. This illusion is created by backlit vinyl ceilings on top of the beds in the rooms of Sidra Medical and Research Center; a «six-star hospital», the most advanced and modern one of the Arabian Peninsula. It is built by OHL in joint-venture with an Egyptian-American company and it is made up of five buildings; four of them already delivered –the last one nearing completion–. Presided by Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, for Qatar it is an instrument to fulfill the desire to be the center of excellence in biomedical research in the region and support the development of a knowledge-based economy. «We are a very small country with a small population. You have to be confident enough to believe in yourself and humble enough to think beyond yourself. Education is the key for any kind of development», she has said on several occasions. Sheikha Moza, as she is commonly referred to, is the mother of the current Emir and the wife of the past one. She embodies the most sophisticated image of Qatar in the West. She's cultured and refined, has a BA in Sociology and displays overwhelming security exposing her

views. She chairs Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. Under its umbrella is Education City, a campus of 1,751 acres in Ar Rayyan, on the outskirts of Doha, where renowned universities and research centers such as Georgetown University, HEC Paris and Carnegie Mellon University have landed the past few years.

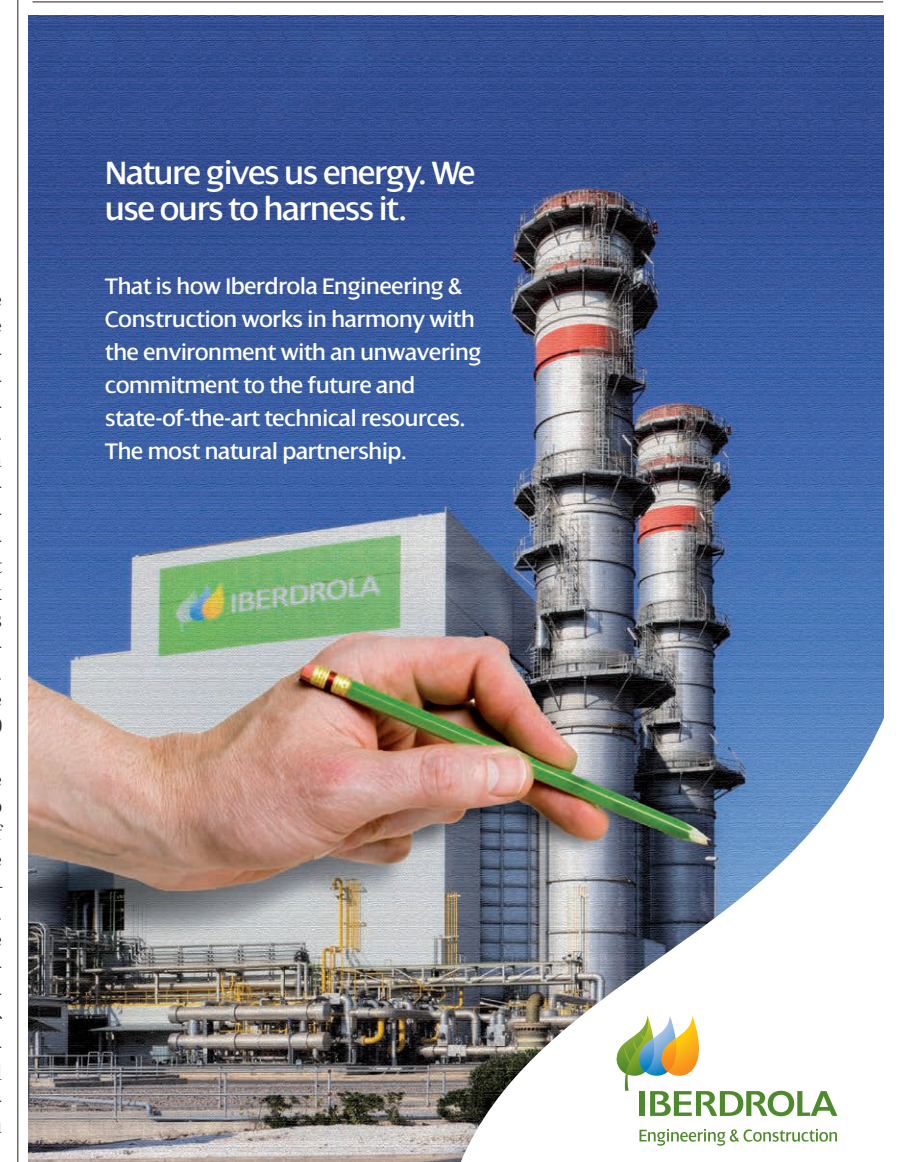
From Qatar to the world

And now there is Sidra; in the words of Sheikha, «the most ambitious and far-reaching project to date. Not only will it allow our medical students to learn in one of the finest and most technologically advanced facilities anywhere, but it will provide healthcare of the highest global standards to the people of Qatar and the Gulf. What we are building in Education City is not for our generation. Perhaps if we're lucky we may see something. I can picture Qatar as a small lab finding solutions for the the rest of the world.»

According to the managers of OHL, there is nothing like Sidra in Spain. It has an area of 320,000 square meters and, in a straight line, all the cables used would circle the planet several times. From the outside it's stunning. So is its interior.

Nature gives us energy. We use ours to harness it.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

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MANUEL PELÁEZ, PRESIDENT OF GRUPO ECISA

«Qatar has been and is our best bet in the international arena»

Around 40% of Ecisa's business will be generated in Qatar this year. It was the first Spanish construction company to enter this market and it has just gotten its largest ever contract in the Gulf for €200 million

Ecisa Harinsa just signed its largest contract in Qatar since its arrival in 2007: the JW Marriott hotel, a €200 million investment for Daphne Hotels Company, a firm belonging to BTC (Business Trading Company), the owner of the Landmark Mall and very prestigious in the country. After landing in the Gulf, the subsidiary of the Alicante-based group was valued for its expertise in the construction of high-rise buildings –thirty in Benidorm–, but its first work was neither in the capital nor a skyscraper, but the ABM Military College and related sports fields right in the middle of the desert, 30 kilometers away from Doha. It was for the PEO, the Private Engineering Office of the Emir. Then came two data centers for Qatar Foundation – the last one, the largest in the Gulf, is in the delivery stage– with a combined value of €90 million, and Bin Samikh tower, which is worth €57 million, its first high-rise building in West Bay. And so on until a total of thirteen.

The generational transition

Ecisa is a family-owned business founded back in 1968 by Manuel Peláez Castillo, a philanthropist known for his commitment to education, sponsorship and charity patronage. In 2013 he was honored with the Alicante Man of the Year Award and in May 2014 he posthumously received the Silver Medal of the Red Cross. His sons,



Manuel Peláez

Manuel and Enrique Peláez Robles, president and International director general respectively, speak of him with admiration. The founder wished for his people to retire at the company «but then the market has the last word and the employee is free to do as he pleases. Ecisa's generational transition is not only at the level of shareholders; we appreciate the inclusion of second generations and there are many cases throughout the company, some of them in Qatar», says the president.

In Qatar, Ecisa has grown to be a respected company. In private, some large construction peers say they wish they had signed all the contracts won by the company from Alicante. And this is even taking into account that in terms of turnover, each individual project that it has undertaken so far barely exceeded €100 million. Given its medium size –we play in our league, where we try to be the best– the company prefers to go slowly and diversify risk. In the environment of the Emir's office (PEO), Ecisa is referred to as «a Spanish company that does things right» and an Indian contractor says that «they are serious people who stay true to their word.»



Waldorf Astoria Hotel, Doha

Being resourceful is key in Qatar

Despite its positioning, Manuel Peláez Robles claims that «Qatar is not a treasure island, but a very competitive market. The profitability of contracts is higher than the one achieved in recent years in Spain, but I pay more in interest rates than what I would like to pay.» And that's a big concern for a construction company. «The client pays you when he's able to do so due to his administrative procedures. For us, to bet on a big construction project is a weakness. A little mismatch and you've got a problem. And while no one goes unpaid there are delays in collecting payments that imply a need for local financial support. Qatar is another country, another government, another culture. It's very important to be resourceful and not be rigid», Peláez says. Does that mean you have to be persistent? «I don't know. You need to be smart. This depends on who's across the table. I wouldn't advise one to be insistent but cautious and aware of the fact that, as is the case with us, 51% of our subsidiary belongs to a Qatari citizen.» This is based on the fact that there is a requirement for foreign companies to have a Qatari partner who controls 51% of all shares in any corporation, with a few exceptions. «If tomorrow my partner tells me I cannot get into Qatar, I cannot. Therefore, the relationship of respect and compliance with the contract he signs must be on absolute terms.»

Their strategy involves the consolidation and continuity in the market and from there to make the leap into other countries in the Gulf some day. The speed with which they take that leap will be determined by the company's professionals. «We're growing a lot in Qatar and

that prevents us from being in other markets. People with talent, languages and culture from our company are essential for the international development of Ecisa. In Qatar we have a fine group of professionals with those characteristics. And if they're there they can't be elsewhere. The team that undertakes the international growth of Ecisa must know our values and be consistent with our thinking. Our people have to be professional, serious, socially committed and they must comply with the law. This is learned at home and in Qatar there's a lot of people who are aware of this», says Peláez.

No streets paved with gold



Luis Andreu

«In Qatar the streets are not paved with gold. Winning good contracts for medium enterprises requires considerable time and effort. Con-

fronting competitors from all over the world is a very tough task; for example, Korean and Arabic companies that end up taking a good part of the business», says Luis Andreu, Middle East Area Manager of Ecisa Group. He has been in the company for fifteen years now; the last six stationed in Qatar. From the outside, there are several reasons for this happening. «It is difficult to compete with companies using cheap labor», says Andreu, and «on the other hand, their country's political leaders have a strong commercial involvement. Institutional support is decisive in Qatar». What would Ecisa Harinsa ask from potential public clients such as Ashghal, the Public Works Authority? «The Qataris are open to constructive criticism because they have a continuous desire to improve. Having said that, I would like a more regulated system put in place and also to know what's more important to take into account during the bidding process», says Andreu. Ecisa Harinsa employs 650 workers of fifteen nationalities. The four or five key persons handling the project are Spaniards. In a nutshell, 35 employees who have relocated to Doha with their families.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Read the full interviews on www.mymmerchan.com

QATAR IS INVESTING €35 BILLION IN LUSAIL CITY, A SUSTAINABLE CITY COMMISSIONED BY QATARI DIAR

Debut in Qatar

The construction of the LRT connecting the districts of Lusail City is carried out by QDVC and supervised by SENER in its role of independent checker: the company responsible for ensuring compliance with the project's technical and quality requirements. It's SENER's debut in Qatar

The headquarter of Qatari Diar in Lusail City displays a show of power on scale models. Khalid, a young Qatari man explains each of them pausing at the sight of the Fund's flagship, Lusail City, a metropolis that will be home to 200,000 residents, 170,000 workers and 80,000 visitors, within an area of 38 square kilometers. It will have four islands and 22 hotels and it will house the stadium for the kick-off and final matches of FIFA World Cup in 2022. There are eight years to go. Not a single foundation yet. The four tram-line LRT without overhead line, with almost 28 km of surface mapping and monitored by SENER, keeps a better pace. In total, 35 stations will connect the city. State-of-the-art technology and top-level engineering coexist in the same place. «Will you invest in Lusail?», asks Khalid. About 70% of the land was already sold in 2009.

At the same time 6,000 km away, Jorge Sendagorta, president of SENER, was outlining the company's strategic plan for the next three years. He's good at motivating his employees; nearly 6,000 in fifty countries. With revenues exceeding €1.2 billion, the company keeps a low profile but it has a strong foundation. R+D is embedded in its gens and it has always acknowledged the importance of techno-



From left to right: José Gregorio Briz and Luis Bazán Uriarte, from SENER

logical innovation and differentiation. In 1966 it built a rocket launch tower in Kiruna (Sweden), which is still standing and has not had a single glitch. «What I have always liked about SENER is the freedom to work. Initiative knows no boundaries. One reaches groundbreaking solutions by not blocking creativity. And if your approach is wrong the reaction is good: mistakes are necessary. He who makes no mistakes does not move forward», claims Jose Gregorio Briz, director general of Infrastructure and Transport at SENER.

A project that fits like a glove

In 2013 SENER deployed an 11-m diameter parasol-type sunshield to protect Gaia, a satellite of the ESA (European Space

Diplomacy with the Anglosphere

What does being an independent checker involve? «A prestigious reference; one supervises the design of large engineering works and this demands having displayed effective skills and relevant prior experience. It's necessary to have own overall ability to handle many and varied disciplines and be independent to evaluate everything at arm's length», explains Luis Bazan Uriarte, director of Infrastructure and Transport Operations at SENER.

«The geometry of project organization is the biggest challenge at Lusail. The actors involved are Lusail (end client) and QDVC (contractor), plus all large engineering companies in different areas. And among them is SENER, with a very important mission, which is to ensure that everything is done in line with the Qatari regulations, according to the standards and the contract. And this company is Spanish», says Briz. The scenario is complex. «The main difficulty has been to earn everyone's respect; including engineering companies from

the Anglosphere. You have to stand up for the client and sometimes tell them they're not doing things right. This causes stress and requires a good amount of skill. So this has been the case for four years, with things improving over time.»

Despite the daily dynamics, they both see them within normal limits. «We have high level companies as competitors, which have no interest in making things easy for you, but that happens everywhere within a framework of high levels of professionalism and responsibility and mutual respect. It's something we have to coexist with», Briz and Bazan say while also pointing out that one of the beauties of the project is to have gone beyond monitoring and verification. «Our position has not been the typical Anglo stance to remain somewhat distant, controlling the roles of the different actors and each document's compliance; we have gone further, proposing technological solutions as we have seen that there was room for improvement in the ones submitted, which is gratifying.»



The LRT in Lusail City will have almost 28 kms of surface mapping and 35 stations

Agency) whose mission is to observe one billion stars. Simultaneously, it provides engineering services in infrastructure and transport, maritime, power and processes. The Lusail project fits SENER like a glove. «The whole spectrum of systems is critical in the railway sector. The terminology and concepts have parallels with those employed in other areas of our company, such as the aerospace and industrial ones», says Briz. When they arrived to Qatar they were already in Abu Dhabi. «We were awarded a landmark project; the light railway» says Briz. It was their showcase. They competed with the largest engineering multinationals. Vinci had seen them work in other parts of the world and invited them to oversee the design and

construction of QDVC in Lusail. They bid on the project and won. It was five years ago. «It's a development that opens new doors; we secured new contracts related to the project and we're negotiating future ones. It has constituted our strategic positioning in Qatar. Our commitment is long term. We want to share what we do and help Qatar develop and cover those needs that the state has clearly identified, which is quite unusual. We have in mind partnerships like those established by Vinci, Hochtief or DB Bahn. We would be delighted if they became a reality and that transcends the area of infrastructure and transport because our capabilities in power, aerospace and maritime engineering contribute a lot to countries like Qatar.»

ENRIQUE PELÁEZ, INTERNATIONAL MANAGING DIRECTOR

«Local banking did not give us a red carpet welcome, now we enjoy 100% Qatari financing»

Qatar is the country that is offering more opportunities to Ecisa; thirteen contracts worth €660 million since 2008 when it was awarded its first project, 80% of those with private clients. In early June it signed the last one, the JW Marriott hotel, worth €200 million. It is the largest one in its history in Qatar, where it has gone from being unknown to being reliable. «Local banking did not give us a red carpet welcome but it does support things well-done and today we enjoy 100% Qatari financing. We have had up to €200 million in bank loans», says Enrique Peláez. Currently they're building the Waldorf Astoria hotel, an €85 million investment, and a logistics center for staff maintenance and rental car fleet for a sum of 40 million. Simultaneously, it is completing the execution of six towers, a 135 million investment at La Perla, whose structure

is delivered to them already finished. Eight years ago, Enrique began a journey in search of a market. They had seen signs of the future halt of the construction sector. «The banks began to cut down their financial aid in Spain and that strangled the industry», he says. They made their SWOT analysis and started a strategic investment to identify stable markets with an inclination for development and physical and legal security.

«We were good building skyscrapers, hydraulic works and railway projects.» They took towards other continents. Qatar was their first destination and, in 2011, based on the experience of its first three projects, they opened subsidiaries in Morocco and Algeria. They also operate in Portugal, Ireland, Chile, Taiwan and Mozambique and have set up an office in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Ghana.



Enrique Peláez

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INFRASTRUCTURE

What lies beneath the acronym

HLG, a subsidiary of Grupo ACS, leads the ranking of Spanish companies in Qatar by business volume; a total of €3.2 billion since its establishment. Almost half of it, €1.4 billion, comes from contracts signed between January and June 2014



Al Shaqab Equestrian Academy, built by HLG in Education City, Qatar

Few people know that the capital of Spanish-based Grupo ACS, runs through the veins of Habtoor Leighton Group (HLG). Headquartered in Sydney, the Australian company is now controlled by Germany's Hochtief, a subsidiary of ACS. In 2007, Leighton merged its Middle East operations with UAE corporation Al Habtoor Engineering. Thus HLG was born, being controlled by the Spanish construction company through its subsidiary Leighton. Those were turbulent times since, shortly after landing, the global financial crisis exploded on the scene and the joint-venture was dragged down by the collapse of the property market in Dubai. ACS then intervened appointing trustworthy managers in key positions. This was how José Antonio López-Monís, a senior manager of Dragados, came to the Middle East as

CEO and managing director. This was in October 2012. In March 2014 after downsizing its payroll by getting rid of a certain number of managers HLG was awarded a €1.23 billion contract for the design and construction of a section of the New Orbital Highway near Doha for Ashghal, Qatar's Public Works Authority. It will connect the industrial city of Mesaieed with the new port. It is the largest contract signed with a Spanish company this year in Qatar. What followed in May was the pre-award for the construction of 128 km of large diameter pipelines for one of Doha's mega reservoir and fiber optic ducts. In the meantime, HLG has managed to move forward with the negotiations—and thus reach a satisfactory agreement for both parties—with the owner of Doha City Center, for whom it is building three hotels at West Bay.

A Five-star establishment ... but for horses

A pool, a hospital, refrigerated stables, smart cribs. Nothing is enough to preserve the pure Arab race. The five-star Al Shaqab Equestrian Academy built by HLG has an elliptic building footprint of almost one million square meters. It had a contract value of 579 million euros and it houses over 320 horses for different purposes: breeding and show, endurance, competition ... It has an Olympic-standard indoor arena with an adjoining outdoor one with a 0.85 km airfoil protecting it from desert wind. With capacity for 7,000 seated spectators, it leaves a long-lasting impression. It won the Quality Building Award

2012 in Hong Kong and a mere walk allows one to appreciate the care with which Qatar Foundation (HLG's client) treats horses. Trucks with fresh alfalfa, caregivers come and go... Barely any noise at all. Even the outside pavement is designed for animals with suggestive names such as Coco Shanel—yes, with an s—, a mare with an enviable glow, to raise their foals, exercise and compete. Their pedigree and other information is conveniently recorded in the enclosure's control building. Equestrian culture is so ingrained in Qatar that even the Emir has an apartment within the Academy; a room with a view.

AGUSTÍN DELGADO, DIRECTOR OF INNOVATION AT IBERDROLA

«You can be an energy company without owning generation or transmission assets»

The 2,000 megawatt combined gas cycle plant that the Spanish utility has built in Qatar is one of the largest in the world

It was September 2004 and Qatar still wasn't famous for soccer nor for its airline, but Iberdrola saw a promising market and set up an office in Doha. Ten years later, Qatar is its strategic partner through Qatar Holding that has a 9.54% stake. Spain's largest utility is about to complete its «innovation ecosystem» for the Middle East, integrated by Kahramaa (Qatar General Electricity & Water Corporation), Qatar National University—where it intends to develop research projects—and Siemens as equipment and solutions supplier. «It is a powerful puzzle capable of transforming knowledge into innovation and innovation into business for the benefit of all. You can be an energy company without owning generation or transmission assets», says Agustín Delgado, director of Innovation at Iberdrola. Qatar is thus configured in its regional hub from which to develop products and services to sell, first in Qatar, then in the region.

Sánchez Galán's entry into Iberdrola brought in a strategic plan that ended



Agustín Delgado, Director of Innovation at Iberdrola

Qatar Holding already holds a 9.54% stake in Iberdrola

in 2006: the company doubled its size in Spain and it decided to go global, growing through acquisitions in the UK, US and Brazil. It also got involved in the renewables and engineering business on an international scale. It is within this scenario that its engineering division started operations in Qatar back in 2004. «In 2007, we began the construction of a combined cycle gas plant—2000 MW—in Mesaieed, one of the largest in the world», tells Delgado. It was a contract worth US\$ 1.65 billion. The company's «modus operandi» aroused the interest of the Qataris, who initially purchased 6.16% of Iberdrola's shares. «That deal helped us in our global business goals and in strengthening ties with Kahramaa with whom we signed a strate-

gic plan in 2011. Thus an innovation and development (i+D) unit was created to develop a research project in Qatar to come up with proposals for the development of smart grids and the integration of renewables into the local power network.

Qatar is the largest per capita consumer of electricity and water in the world; it is surprising for example, that inside public buildings like shopping malls the temperature can be so low that people wear winter clothes. The government wants to encourage energy efficiency measures, saving on resources and a reduction of CO2 emissions. In the midst of development, the challenges are big; demand growth is dramatic, requiring modern infrastructure solutions and investments. Since consumption subsidies are in place, Qataris do not perceive the price signal. For the government, however, all gas consumed in Qatar is gas that cannot be exported, suffering therefore an opportunity cost. «Any incentive to save energy that can be export-

HLG was awarded a €1.23 billion contract for the design and construction of a section of the New Orbital Highway

Grupo ACS' man in Doha HLG is different today. This is acknowledged both by its employees and by the market, that is again taking notice of the company including the oil sector, as its managers sought, given the geography where it runs its business. It has cut by more than half its overhead costs and it has promoted, for example, dignity and respect policies for employees regardless of sex, nationality, race or religion. Lopez-Monís, a 52 year-old civil engineer from Burgos, likes to go unnoticed. He flies from Dubai to Doha in the small hours of the night in low-cost airlines and it's been said that «his door is always open to his team». His 24 years in Dragados have taken him to countries such as Ecuador, Colombia and South Africa. He was also the company's president in the US. He traveled light to the Middle East. In April, HLG started recruiting fifty Spanish technicians and their intention is to hire additional employees: engineers, technical engineers, architects and project managers. Currently nearly 20,000 people are on its payroll. According to Lopez-Monís «in this part of the world, success is to have own resources to undertake construction projects.» For the time being, he foresees a bright future for ACS in the area.

ed is a significant added value to Qatar. This is also the case in terms of power infrastructure in generation, transport and marketing. And adequate demand management helps decrease the degree of investment in network development», says Delgado. Iberdrola offers support and collaboration to Kahramaa for those benefits to truly emerge. It also wants to play a «major role» in energy management prior and during 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Kahramaa was—and still is—a small company. «Our alliance brings them benefit since globally we are pioneers in developing power systems with smart grid capabilities. We are carrying out work to create their future network and launching Iberdrola's new lines of business in Qatar, in connection with electric power transmission and possibly with the integration of renewables into the local network. We are a utility and provide an electricity company's vision. That's crucial for Kahramaa». Currently, the Qatari corporation is also building a training facility that Iberdrola would like to manage. It's not alone though; among its heavyweight rivals is EDF. «Nobody said this would be easy» conveys Delgado.

Iberdrola also maintains contact with Qatar Foundation and QSTP (Qatar Science & Technology Park) where the Spanish power company would like to set up an office for smart grid research and a lab in collaboration with the park itself. For Iberdrola these past ten years have been fruitful indeed.

SPORT

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The best ally of the «Qatar» brand

Qatar plays in the Premier League. It sponsors FC Barcelona, has purchased Paris Saint-Germain and it's hiring top-notch athletes. It will invest €20 billion in sports infrastructure and will host the FIFA 2022 World Cup, but it will first put its capacities to the test at several international events

Sheikh Saoud Al Thani recalls that elite athletes like Pele and Cassius Clay came to Qatar when he was a child. It happened in the 70's. «People think that our interest in sports is new, but it has been in our agenda for more than forty years now», says the secretary general of the Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC), listing Qatari achievements such as the bronze medals of Nasser Al Attiyah and Mutaz Barshim in shooting and high jump, respectively, in London 2012. «Given our size, those achievements make people get excited about sports and sporting events. It happened in Barcelona 92. Cities change; the best teams in the world are now in Spain. Spaniards have managed to market sport extraordinarily».

Qatar—the only country in the world with a national sports day—does not fall behind. Saoud Al Thani is one of the players of a state machinery focused on boosting sports and using it as a public relations arsenal. He arrived at QOC in 2001.



From left to right: Ahmed Al Shabi and Valero Rivera

In 2005 Qatar Sports Investment (QSI)—a joint venture between QOC and Qatar Investment Authority (QIA)—was founded with the aim to invest in sport, leisure and entertainment assets. It sponsors FC Barcelona and its portfolio includes—among others—Paris Saint-Germain and sportswear brand Burrrda Sport. «One of our priorities is to continue to attract international sporting events», he says. The FIFA 2022 World Cup will be a milestone, though not the only one.

Spanish sports under the Qatari spotlight

It is no easy task to develop a sport in a society that has the highest per-capita income in the world. «Lots of time and patience are required in the development of an athlete. You learn to discipline your body and mind, manage stress and failure, and appreciate success, which are values you uphold for the rest of your life», says Khaleel Al Jabir, director of



Khaleel Al Jabir, Sheikh Saoud Al Thani and Osama Malouli

Sports at QOC and president of the Qatar Swimming Association that will be hosting two international championships in August and December, followed by the Handball Championship in January 2015. «Come», says Ahmed Al Shaabi—former handball player for Al Saad, the same club where Raul plays—, president of the handball association and also vice president of Q2015, the organization committee of the championship. «Spain is a priority due to its status as world champion. I love Spanish handball. We brought in a head coach of international standing and his assistant coaches», he says, referring to Valero Rivera, coach of the Spanish national team in 1993 and between 2008 and 2013 and who now coaches Qatar's national team. «For us he's the right man at the right time. We hope to make it big in 2015», he says.

The goal: top-notch athletes

Valero saw Qatar's national team play for the very first time in a video during his first flight to Doha. The association wanted to hire him as its head coach but he didn't feel inclined to leave Barcelona and rejected their invitation twice. The third time he sought advice from Pep Guardiola and decided to meet with them and give it a try. He was accompanied by his wife, a former Swedish handball player who said «you're gonna have plenty of work». He returned to Spain having signed the contract. What convinced him? «The interest they showed in me, the vision and professionalism of their association, its president and staff. All clubs have excellent facilities; better than the ones in Spain. It was a surprise. For people who love sport, this country is a must», he says. He loves it. He spent twelve years as a player and twenty years as head coach in FC Barcelona and is one of the most distinguished and successful coaches inside and outside Spain. In Qatar, he has a Spartan-like office with his computer and a television. «It's all I need». Right beside him is an assistant coach. «We're working a lot on defensive and tactic discipline and I'm delighted with the work of the players. Handball in Qatar is heading in an excellent direction», he says. Qatar won their first ever Men's Handball Asian Championship in Bahrain early this year. Was this the expected outcome? «I hoped for it rather than expecting it. Based on our training evolution I think we can be among the top eight teams in the world at the time of the world championship», he replies. Word has gone around that he is treated with the honors of a grand general. «It's not true that I am free to do as I wish. Everything is done by mutual agreement. They have seen that I've come to work, but we follow the same line of work and they accept almost all the proposals I make. I feel recognized and supported. I'm a lucky man. If things remain this way, I'll retire in Qatar.»

Future international sporting events in Qatar

• FINA World Swimming Championship 8/2014 • World Swimming Championship (25m) 12/2014 • World Boxing Championship 10/2015 • World Artistic Gymnastics Championship 2018 • FIFA World Cup 2022



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AVIATION

AKBAR AL BAKER, QATAR AIRWAYS' CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

«Having Spanish pilots in our fleet is a way to support the economy of Spain»

Qatar's national carrier wants to use Spain as a gateway to increase operations in Latin America

Qatar Airways just moved to the new Hamad International Airport (HIA), where it operates as the national carrier. Mr. Akbar Al Baker, Qatar Airways' CEO, is a graduate in Economics and Commerce, who also holds a private pilot license. He is looking at Spain as a gateway into Latin America. Last known turnover and profit figures go back to 2009-2010 (€1,140bn and €56 million). Since then the company's financial reports are considered a «sensitive and confidential issue». Mr. Al Baker came on board in 1997 when the airline operated 4 aircrafts to a handful of destinations. He has a reputation for being tough and demanding. Trade unions do not appeal to him and he doesn't mince his words about it. The airline has ambitious plans to grow and the Qatari Government is investing accordingly around €37 bn. It is a member of the Oneworld Alliance since October 2013, where Iberia is already a member.

-Question: HIA will have a yearly capacity when fully complete for 50 million passengers. Some think that the capacity of Doha, Dubai and Abu Dhabi airports will soon be higher than that of Heathrow, PCG and Frankfurt combined. In the aviation world there are talks about a new Silk Road. Any comment on it?

«We currently have ten flights a week to Barcelona and one daily flight to Madrid»

-Answer: There's enough room for everybody. In the last years the number of international travellers has increased enormously and the tendency keeps to be upwards. We won't need to take anybody's share to grow. When I came to the company the objective was to become the best airline in the world and to serve Qatar's economy. We have been named Airline of the Year 2012, for the second consecutive year, by global industry audit Skytrax. The Government's role with its investments on Qatar Airways is to become a 5-star airline, which is what we are. Our mission will become more and more important the nearer we get to the FIFA World Cup 2022. Every 12 days we get a new aircraft.

-Q: Qatar Airways is said to be a tough customer and to give its manufacturers, Boeing and Airbus, a hard time.

-A: It's true. Our standards are very high when it comes to delivering new aircrafts. Many airlines had problems with the Boeing 787, but we didn't have any. And this is thanks to our highly trained and qualified team of engineers who perform all kinds of site inspections. We are an innovative airline and we also want to keep on being the best-performing airline in the world, also in regards to security. We're investing €37 bn to purchase 300 aircrafts in order to be able to increase the number of



HIA, Qatar's brand new airport will have a 50 million passenger capacity when fully complete

current destinations from 138 to 170 in the next two years. We pride ourselves on incorporating state-of-the-art technology in all our activities. That's why we are the airline which launches a big part of the new aircraft models, among them the Boeing 787 Dreamliner. We have also signed to be the launch customer for the A350 and A380, we don't want to take the normal aircraft but the latest technology aircraft, and we're completely involved in its design. If we take for example the Boeing 787, we've designed the window, the seats, the lighting, so we have our own signature product. Our fleet is less than 4 years old; the youngest in the world. After that, we get rid of them. We give them to the leasing company that can sell or hire them while maintaining a very high standard for our customer who feels that the aircraft has just left the factory.

-Q: You have spoken about Latin America as a «huge economic machine» and a market where to focus. But so far you only fly to Buenos Aires and Sao Paulo.

-A: We are very interested in using Spain as the gateway to Latin America. There are ongoing talks with Spanish authorities to get the flight rights to start operating from Spain.

-Q: Emirates and Singapore Airlines want the same. What are Qatar Airways' competitive advantages?

-A: I can't tell you more than that. We're very much interested in serving the Spanish market with our Premium 5 star product. It's very important for us. We want to go beyond and connect the Middle East with Latin America, starting new destinations with stopover in Spain.

-Q: You've teamed up with FC Barcelona to promote the brand «Qatar». It is strange that in FITUR your country is only represented through the Qatar Airways stand in comparison with the huge display that your neighbour UAE does in the same fair. It looks as if Spain wasn't a priority for Qatar although spending by Spaniards traveling abroad exceeds €17 bn annually.



Akbar Al Baker

-A: Those are commercial decisions, I cannot talk on behalf of the Government. We actually participate in Madrid, but have withdrawn from WTM in London, which is the strongest competitor to ITB Berlin and FITUR. Those exhibitions charge a lot of money and we need to review the return on our investment. The fact that Qatar Airways is still at FITUR is a sign of our commitment with Spain. We currently have ten flights a week to Barcelona and one daily flight to Madrid. And we are doing all types of promotions.

-Q: There are pictures of you at ITB Berlin, but never in FITUR.

-A: That's irrelevant. It all depends on my itinerary. I've been in Spain three times since August last year and I hope to go back very soon.

-Q: How many Spanish pilots work at Qatar Airways?

-A: 10% of our pilot population comes from Spain, 249 to be exact. We are happy with them, they bring on board knowledge and expertise and for us it is a way

to support the Spanish economy. Most of them come from Spanair and we will keep on increasing the number as we increase our fleet and the flights with Spain.

-Q: Yo have a rival, Turkish Airlines, offering very competitive prices; in fact they're half yours. Will you modify your rates?

-A: It's normal that our rates are higher. To begin with there is a big difference between flying direct and non direct. To be fair we would need to compare us with carriers that fly direct from Spain to Qatar.

-Q: Only Qatar Airways can fly direct between Spain and Qatar.

-A: In the Middle East we have to be compared to direct flights from other airlines such as Emirates and Etihad. We are focused on offering a Premium 5-star product with all the assets I've already spoken about and additional ones such as the menus by world-class chefs, the in-flight entertainment, the fully flat seats in business class, the attention of the cabin crew... It really shows that we are very competitive and we are also very proud of our product. It turns the flight into a completely different experience.

-Q: It has been published that Qatar Airways fires those cabin crew members that get pregnant and those who marry.

-A: That's absolutely untrue. It is part of a campaign against Qatar. Pregnant women do have to stop flying because of the safety regulations of Civil Aviation, which are by the way not different to the rest of the international airlines. The marriage issue is though a different story. One of the conditions of our single status contract is to remain single for a 5-years period. It's clear and transparent and the candidate signs it knowingly under this clause. It's a common practice in the airlines of the Gulf, we don't force anybody to accept it. We make a huge investment to train our cabin crew and the degree of satisfaction is very high. We offer them a tax free salary, double the one they get in Spain, paid holidays and free accommodation, free electricity and water, free telephone calls, laundry and transportation.

From West to East via Qatar

Qatar just opened a brand new airport: HIA (Hamad International Airport) is ready to serve 30 million passengers a year and aims to be a genuine hub for international aviation

Whether the epicenter of global aviation will move or not to the Arabian Peninsula is something yet to be seen, but Qatar is contributing more than a grain of sand to make it happen. The country has just opened a new airport, Hamad International Airport (HIA) with a current handling capacity of 30 million passengers a year and 50 million in its full build-out. It began as a €6.6 billion state investment and it has exceeded €11 billion. According to Abdulaziz Al Noaimi, chairman of Qatar Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), «the exponential growth of the national carrier Qatar Airways led to the scope being enhanced; the phased building of the project was enlarged dramatically to keep pace with the growing transit traffic in Qatar and in the region». HIA's area extends over 29 square kilometers; one fifth of the entire size of Doha, and it is intended to be a genuine hub for glob-



Abdulaziz Al Noaimi, Chairman of Qatar Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)

al aviation, both for passengers as well as aircraft cargo, maintenance and repair. «Recent reports indicate that €29.3 billion are being invested in airport infrastructure in the Arabian Gulf and 450 million passengers are expected to travel through these airports by 2020. Aircraft traffic in the Gulf countries is expected to exceed 2.3 million flights by 2025. We believe competition is essential to raise the standards of service and provide impetus to develop aviation related services. All hubs have an equal advantage of location and are investing wisely. What will set them apart is excellence in service and the quality of facilities which HIA will deliver», says Al Noaimi. Within this framework for achieving excellence, Madrid-based Ferrovial Servicios is contracted by Qatar Airways as facil-

ities manager for €30 million per annum for a three-year period, with the option to renew for a further similar term. «The joint venture between the two results in a great synergy for the airline, airport operations and facilities maintenance. HIA will benefit greatly from this strategic alliance», says Al Noaimi. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (WTO), by 2030 the Middle East will receive 140 million visitors a year – in 2010 it had 61 million incomers-. «Qatar National Vision (QNV) 2030 estimates that this country will receive 7 million visitors by 2030, a contribution of a little over 5% to the GDP. We are ready to serve the nation's tourism ambitions and make the vision of positioning Qatar as 'a world-class hub with deep cultural roots' a reality»

THE AIRPORT IN FIGURES

Passengers:

- Current capacity: 30 million passengers and 50 million, once completed.
- 40,000 sq m of retail, shopping and food and beverages.
- 45,000 sq m of luxury lounges and free-to-use activity nodes.
- Two 100-room transit hotels.
- A spa, squash courts, swimming pool.
- 28 museum-quality art installations.

Cargo:

- 77,000 sq m two-floor cargo facility.
- Current capacity: 1.4 million tons per annum,

- set to double in full build-out
- Fully automated state of the arte facility.
- Includes live animal center, cargo agents offices and warehouses

Aircraft maintenance hangar:

- 150,000 sq m state of the arte maintenance with the largest free span hangar in the world
- Simultaneous capacity for 13 aircrafts of different configurations, including two positions for servicing A380s
- Automated storage and retrieval system warehouse for over 350,000 spare parts, from smallest components to A380 wheels

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