

Building management industry raises its profile

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The building maintenance and facility management sector in the Arabian Gulf countries, expected to be worth \$10bn in the next two years is raising its profile as building owners seek to trim costs in the global downturn.

'It has been a tough six months for the property and construction industry but, despite the current economic situation, the outlook for the facilities management market is very positive.'

His Excellency Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Chairman of DP World, opens FM Expo at Dubai Exhibition and Convention Centre.

said Louisa Theobald, Group Exhibitions Director of Streamline Marketing Group, organisers of FM Expo and the Property and Facilities Management Conference.

'According to recent studies, the outsourced facilities management sector in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries alone is expected to reach a value of \$10bn by 2012,' she added.

FM Expo, the leading event in the region dedicated to property and facilities management with a 30% increase in international exhibitors compared with last year, was opened today (24 May 2009) at the Dubai Exhibition and Convention Centre by His Excellency Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Chairman of DP World.

'Until now many in the Middle East have been taking facility management for granted,' Theobald said. 'Building maintenance was seen as simply about fixing things when they break or go wrong. Efficient facility management is much, much more. For example, it is about knowing where to put air conditioners so they are efficient and do not consume too much costly electricity.'

'The introduction of facilities management from the outset of a building is also critical. The standard industry assessment is that the development cost of a facility is only 20% of the total money spent across the lifetime of a building,' Theobald added.

Leading regional companies - such as United Arab Emirates telecommunications provider Etisalat - have established their own facilities management companies or divisions. Etisalat Facilities Management, a platinum sponsor of FM Expo for example, has more than 600 in-house and 1,000 outsourced staff serving clients in education, hospitality, information technology, the aviation business and the Islamic public sector.

In a keynote address at the two-day Property and Facilities Management Conference which opens tomorrow (25 May 2009) at Al Murooj Rotana Hotel, Dubai, Stan Mitchell, CEO of Key Facilities Management International, and founding Chairman of the Global Facility Management Association, will outline how public and private property owners and developers can soften the impact of the economic downturn on their businesses.

Mick Dalton, General Manager at Abu Dhabi-based Marafeq Facilities Management and a

past chairman of the British Institute of Facilities Management, will be chairing the conference and will outline how green building regulations can not only reduce utility bills but also create more jobs in the facilities management sector at little or no extra cost to building owners.

(AME Info)