

BETON WLL

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MAKING READY

Robert Tarazi, managing director of Qatar's leading ready-mix concrete company Beton WLL, talks to Gay Sutton about preparing the company for significant growth





Batching plant
and KTI ice and
chiller plant

Qatar is undergoing a remarkable period of construction and development as it prepares to host the world’s most prestigious sporting event—the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Millions of visitors from around the world will flock to this iconic Arab state and already the first wave of World Cup-oriented construction is underway. Over the next few years construction will begin on the football stadiums and hotels to house the influx of sports people and visitors.

“The football World Cup in 2022 is certainly a booster for development, but is only one of many,” explains Robert Tarazi, managing director of Beton WLL, Qatar’s leading supplier of ready-mix concrete for the construction industry. A subsidiary of the Lebanese ready-mix concrete company Liban Beton, Beton WLL has been in Qatar for more than 12 years.

Its origins were small. “Our parent company, Liban Beton, was originally awarded a contract to build the Four Seasons Hotel in Doha in the year 2000. We built a manufacturing plant on the beach for that project which lasted for two years. But then we stayed.”

Over the intervening years, the company has grown to become one of the largest and most highly respected players in the field, working on such prestigious projects as the Ras Laffan common cooling seawater project (which included building a temporary concrete plant on site for the duration of the three-year project); the Khalifa stadium and sports city; the massive Heart of Doha project; and the Barwa Financial District.

Today, Beton has moved beyond being simply a supplier of ready-mix concrete, and is now a tier one contractor and service provider to the Qatari construction industry, employing some 400 staff including a team of high calibre engineers and technicians. Concrete is currently produced at three concrete production plants strategically located close to major ongoing construction projects.

The newest production site is located at Al Rayyan and consists of two batching plants producing a total of 225 cubic metres of concrete per hour. Opened just three months ago, it was installed to supply all the concrete required for the Dukhan Highway Project, and is another example of the company's capacity to locate production alongside a major project. "This plant is only temporary and will be closed in two or three years' time, once the project is completed."

The two other Beton plants, however, are permanent facilities and their output is transported for use around the country. The Mesaieed plant occupies a 20,000 square metre site in Mesaieed Industrial city, a rapidly expanding industrial region clustered around the deepwater harbour to the south-east of the country—a location that is often referred to as the 'gateway'

to southern Qatar. Capable of producing 250 cubic metres of concrete per hour, it supplies ready-mix for projects in Mesaieed, Al Wakra and the Doha Airport area. The second permanent plant is in the north-east at Lusail, some 15 kilometres north of central Doha. It is ideally located to supply up to 260 cubic metres of concrete per hour for a wide range of current and future projects associated with the construction

of a completely new planned city of Lusail which will eventually occupy some 38 square kilometres of waterfront.

"Lusail City will be huge," says Tarazi. "At the moment we are working on the infrastructure, but it will eventually include marinas, business centres, an energy city, a media city, a golf course and a range of retail and residential properties to house 200,000 inhabitants." All of these will require concrete, and the projects will be a tremendous growth opportunity for Beton.

In the short-term, there are several major projects on the horizon. These include a light railway for Lusail—a 28.8 kilometre four-line light rail transit network, with 7.6 kilometres and eight of the 32 stops underground. There will be connections

with the planned national rail network at two stations on Al Khor Highway, eventually linking Lusail with destinations across the Emirate. The second major project is the Doha Metro, an 85 kilometre railway network linking central Doha with Lusail, Education City and West Bay as well as the new international airport and the football stadiums. "And these will be very large projects for us."

Beyond Lusail, Beton is deeply involved in the Qatar Development Programme. "It's a fast-moving situation here at the moment," Tarazi comments. "Over the past two years we have been focusing on developing infrastructure across the State of Qatar." And the volume of work is set to increase: considerable investment is being ploughed



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into upgrading the network of highways across the country, and these are either in the planning or construction phase. New harbours and ports are in progress, a new international airport is under construction and a new sewerage system is being laid. In a few years, once the infrastructure is completed, construction will begin on

new industrial, retail, academic, tourism and leisure facilities as well as football stadia and hotels for the World Cup and the growing tourist industry.

The opportunities for Beton are enormous, and the company is already gearing up in preparation. “We have been investing considerably in equipment, manpower and training so that we will be able to meet the increase in demand over the coming years,” Tarazi says. In both 2010 and 2011 the company spent around \$5 million on new equipment and plant, bringing in the latest technology in mixers, truck-mounted and stationary pumps, cement

bulklers, silos, chillers and ice machines, and expanding the company’s operational capacity. “We recently bought the largest mobile pump in the Middle East: a 68 metre boom pump,” he continues. “And we plan to invest a further \$3 million in 2012.”

The pressure for speed and quality on all these projects is intense and in tandem with the rest of the construction industry, Beton operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to comply with this demanding schedule. However, the company has built its reputation on delivering a high quality and reliable service, and is committed to exceeding its customers’ expectations. ISO 9001-compliant, Beton is continuously

striving to improve its processes and standards. As an example, Beton’s large maintenance department has developed and implemented a stringent and highly complex preventive maintenance system across all the batching plants and equipment.

With well planned expansion and investment alongside continuously improving processes, Beton has maintained its position as a major player in Qatar’s ongoing development and dynamic growth. **BE**

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QATAR INTERNATIONAL AUTOMOBILES

Qatar International Automobiles (QIA) is the sole distributor of MAN Truck & Bus in Qatar. With Qatar’s growing construction sector, MAN has become a strong player especially in the Beton Ready-Mix business, supplying chassis as well as complete vehicles inclusive of mixer bodies and pumps. QIA’s highly trained sales and aftersales staff as well as constant vehicle availability and short delivery times guarantee the most effective customer support.

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